



General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

First Committee

2nd meeting

Monday, 30 September 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: It is with much humility and anticipation that I officially commence my work as Chairman of this Committee. The international security challenges on our agenda are both wide and deep — wide, in encompassing issues of global scope, and deep, in touching upon matters that affect human security at its very roots. Last year, the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters warned in its annual report of a "crisis of multilateral disarmament diplomacy". Let us show in our deliberations a new commitment to rekindle the spirit of multilateralism that is so vitally needed to address global threats today. This may be our greatest challenge of all — one we must not fail to overcome.

As has become customary, the Committee will consider some resolutions that echo others adopted at earlier sessions of the General Assembly. These are what former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once termed the "hardy perennials" of our deliberative process. Our goals must be to continue the process of strengthening global norms to eliminate the deadliest weapons the world has ever known, promoting controls over other weapons that threaten international peace and security, and exploring measures to advance conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Yet we will also be considering several new issues, including some that are not yet fully covered by any formal treaty obligations, or in some cases not covered at all — such as missiles, small arms and light weapons, information security and the weaponization of outer space. We are, in short, exploring ways to build and strengthen the architecture of international peace and security, as we are simultaneously seeking to reinforce the foundation upon which this edifice must rest. In performing these roles, let us recognize the need to adapt the various ways and means of achieving disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control to changing times; but let us also reaffirm our collective support for fixed principles and agreed global norms that have served the interests of all Member States well over the years.

According to an old proverb from my country, "However far a stream flows, it never forgets its source." The ultimate source of our work in the field of disarmament is, of course, the United Nations Charter, which provides, in Article 11, that the General Assembly

"may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both."

Other sources include our past deliberations and mandates, and other expectations inspired by

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deliberations at international conferences and within multilateral treaty regimes.

Many of the fundamental principles that continue to serve as the building blocks of the rule of law for disarmament appear in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, which found that

“Enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority.” (S-10/2, para. 13)

The fundamental truth in this particular provision was tragically reaffirmed by the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 — acts that occurred despite enormous disparities in the forces available to the attacking group relative to those of the world’s last remaining super-Power.

In the aftermath of those shockingly brutal events, observers throughout the world community have increasingly asked “Why?” — not in an effort to justify the attacks, but to understand their occurrence and thereby reduce the chances of similar events happening again. While the 1987 report of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development did not fully anticipate the extent to which terrorism would evolve into a top-security priority for the world community, it did nevertheless display great wisdom, both in highlighting the importance of addressing the underlying roots of conflict and in cautioning against weapons and the use of force as appropriate or effective ways to resolve such conflicts.

The report stressed:

“The world can either continue to pursue the arms race with characteristic vigour or move consciously and with deliberate speed towards a more stable and balanced social and economic development within a more sustainable international economic and political order; it cannot do both.” (A/CONF/130/39, chapter II, para. 4)

Given the recent trend of rising military expenditures and the more chronic problems of human poverty and underdevelopment, how far have we progressed since that 1987 report cited the existence of

“a growing recognition that both overarmament and underdevelopment constitute threats to international peace and security”? (*ibid.*, para. 6)

Indeed, much of the agenda of this Committee has for decades been shaped by the world’s longstanding difficulties in solving these closely related problems. Now more than ever before, we can see just how far a distance remains to be travelled down the stream of disarmament — to a world without any weapons of mass destruction, and a world in which other weapons are limited to that which is necessary to implement international obligations and to maintain borders and domestic security. In our deliberations over the weeks ahead, we would all be well advised not just to recall the source of our stream, but also its destination.

We should also consider the route along the way, namely our own deliberative process. We should both read and heed the Secretary-General’s recent report on United Nations reform, in particular those parts calling for a reduction in the number of reports that the Secretariat has to produce, reducing also the number of meetings, and improving cooperation with individuals and groups in civil society.

Let us ensure that the First Committee is making its own effort to continue the reform process in a manner that enhances international peace and security in the most efficient and effective manner. I intend to consult with the Bureau in an effort to identify possible options the Committee might consider to eliminate reporting requirements that are no longer necessary, perhaps through the adoption of sunset provisions, and to tighten the focus of the Committee’s resolutions, while limiting their number. Just as the Secretary-General has highlighted the advantages of results-based management, let us also demonstrate our commitment to results-based disarmament by ensuring that our resolutions are susceptible to regular progress assessment.

Another of the Secretary-General’s key messages in his reform report was that the United Nations must keep its focus on doing what matters, in particular, adhering to the priorities defined by the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the various global conferences over the past decade. Since the General Assembly adopted its first resolution in January 1946, the United Nations has had as one of its top priorities the total elimination of all weapons of mass

destruction. That must remain a top priority. The Millennium Declaration reaffirmed the goal by stressing the importance of implementing disarmament treaties. It is therefore fitting that nuclear weapons, the deadliest of such weaponry, should continue to receive the most attention of this Committee both as the world welcomes positive developments and as it points the way to further progress.

We should pay no less attention to problems of compliance with the global norm of disarmament, as we do the global norm of non-proliferation, for both are interdependent challenges, and addressing them together in this Committee is indeed doing what matters. This collective effort will also require focused attention on the unfinished agenda of eliminating chemical and biological weapons. Our goal here must be to encourage universal membership in the chemical and biological weapons conventions and compliance with all their terms, in particular the requirement for the verified destruction of weapon stockpiles and the prohibition of assisting in the acquisition of such weapons.

With regard to conventional weapons, the international small arms conference of July 1991 made substantial progress in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as a major international priority. In accordance with the programme of action adopted by that Conference, countries around the world are now involved in adjusting their laws and policies, reflecting a new determination to combat that difficult problem. The longer the problem goes unresolved, the more it will impede further progress in disarmament, development, human rights, humanitarian relief and many other areas. Those small arms have not yet become a focus for multilaterally binding legal commitments. Such global norms are strengthening each year with respect to another deadly conventional weapon: anti-personnel landmines. In both those areas, national efforts, regional initiatives and global norms together have enormous potential to alleviate real threats to human security, particularly those that threaten the lives of millions each year in developing countries.

My predecessor as Chairman, Ambassador André Erdős, concluded his introductory statement last year by saying: "what is at stake here and now, in Conference Room 4, at United Nations Headquarters in the fall of 2001, is nothing less than the survival and secure existence of our human species."

(A/C.1/56/PV.3, page 3). My only amendment to that conclusion today would be to change the date to 2002, for the stakes have, if anything, grown over the past year. We must continue our efforts to discover anew more effective ways of encouraging States to resolve their disputes without the use or threat of use of force. We must persist in seeking to drive down the number of weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen controls over remaining stockpiles and related materials until their total elimination. Clearly, we must do more to encourage reduction in military spending, while increasing the world's focus on the deeper social and economic roots of security threats. We must also recognize the need for additional efforts to ensure that future generations have the kind of education and training that will enable them to make wise decisions on the critical issues that come before this Committee. We must strengthen the international rule of law as it applies to disarmament and arms regulation by working for universal adherence to agreed global norms and by codifying new laws, as needed, to address emerging threats to international peace and security arising as a result of new technological developments.

Finally, we must accomplish all of the above working in a cooperative spirit, for, ultimately, mutual respect and multilateral cooperation are indispensable in the search for global solutions to the global security problems of our agenda. Together let us show the world what multilateralism can do.

It is my pleasure to give the floor first to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Dhanapala: My congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to guide the work of this Committee. Your experience in education, development and disarmament gives you a solid foundation upon which to preside over the affairs of this important Committee. A special word of welcome to the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste, which join us as the 190th and 191st Member States of our Organization. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and pledge the fullest support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in all your efforts to make this a productive session.

And a productive session it must be, for some of the issues on the agenda affect the lives of billions of people across the globe in more ways than we realize or are prepared to concede. We are here not to carry on

an empty ritual, but to sustain a process of strengthening international peace and security through measures that include the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction and effective controls over other types of weaponry. Many of those issues, especially those dealing with nuclear weapons, will also shape the conditions of international peace and security of generations to come.

How this Committee approaches those challenges will depend a lot upon how it chooses to organize its work. In his latest reform report on strengthening the United Nations, the Secretary-General offers some timely and relevant advice to make the United Nations a more effective institution. He states that it is crucially important for the General Assembly to continue its efforts, to rationalize its agenda and to focus its efforts on outcomes of greater policy relevance and impact — directly relevant to the goals of the Millennium Declaration. He means, in other words, results, or, as you said yourself, Mr. Chairman, results-based disarmament.

This will require that the Committee work harder eliminating overlapping items on its agenda, to stop wasting time and resources on repetitive reports and debates, to reduce duplication and consolidate closely related issues into a coherent deliberative process.

Though the substantive and administrative challenges ahead are formidable, the benefits that disarmament offers to overcome them are as wide as they are rich. Disarmament contributes to conflict prevention, regional confidence-building, alleviation of threats to refugees and in promoting the most precious human right, the right to life.

Disarmament serves the interests of economic development by channelling scarce human and financial resources into more productive pursuits and helps to address the horrible environmental problems arising from past and ongoing weapons development and production. Education on disarmament helps prepare a younger generation to solve its own security challenges without relying upon weapons of mass destruction or the threat or use of force. For these reasons and many more, one can see that disarmament serves the most fundamental goals of the Charter of the United Nations. Everybody is a stakeholder in disarmament, which has been a core priority of the United Nations since its inception.

It is, however, sobering to consider the amount of work that remains to be done, especially with respect to a longstanding agenda item in this Committee — the relationship between disarmament and development. For example, despite its other achievements, the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg missed an extraordinary opportunity to address this issue. Though the Summit's Plan of Implementation referred to peace and security as essential for sustainable development, it took no account of this year's global military expenditure, now estimated at over \$850 billion. Yet according to the UNDP's latest Human Development Report, all of the Millennium Development Goals could be met if official development assistance were increased by about \$50 billion — just a fraction of current military spending — and sustained at that level. Are we so trapped in a weapon-based security syndrome that we have forgotten how disarmament serves development goals?

I have recently proposed — for consideration and sponsorship by one or more Member States — the establishment of an international commission on weapons of mass destruction composed of distinguished experts from many countries under the leadership of co-chairpersons from the North and South. This would be one way to explore new options and to deepen our collective understanding of the many benefits that disarmament offers to all humanity. The commission could examine problems relating to the production, stockpiling, proliferation, and terrorist use of such weapons, as well as issues relating to their means of delivery. It could produce a report for the international community, one designed to stimulate fresh thinking and to inspire concrete action to lead the world out from the shadow of these weapons — the possible use of which is more likely today than ever before.

Progress towards these goals, however, is contingent, not inevitable. Speaking before the States Parties attending the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Secretary-General warned of the accumulation of rust in the multilateral disarmament machinery. In an ominous response to this warning, the United Nations Disarmament Commission failed to meet this year, the year it was to have commemorated its fiftieth anniversary, while the Conference on Disarmament has just concluded its

fourth successive session without any consensus on a programme of work.

Next year will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and its historic Final Document (1978). Yet some 30,000 nuclear weapons reportedly remain in stockpiles around the world, annual military expenditures are rapidly approaching the \$1 trillion level, with no ceiling in sight, and 639 million small arms and light weapons remain in circulation around the world. Only two years after the nuclear-weapon States agreed on an unequivocal undertaking at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, we continue to see references to strategic doctrines that call for the use of nuclear weapons — including doctrines that do not exclude pre-emptive use of such weapons, even against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Will this year, 2002, be best remembered as the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the hydrogen bomb, or for achieving something more positive for international peace and security? The answer, to a significant extent, is in your hands.

The verdict on this year's efforts in the fields of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation so far remains rather mixed. On the positive side, I am pleased to announce to this Committee that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have just agreed — at an expert group meeting last week in Samarkand — on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. They also agreed that the signing of the treaty should take place as soon as possible. This is a significant achievement, not just for the Central Asian States, but also for the United Nations, which has been assisting this effort since 1997, pursuant to resolution 52/38 S. It is all the more significant, given that this region once reportedly hosted over 700 tactical nuclear weapons, not to mention over 1,400 former Soviet strategic nuclear weapons that Kazakhstan returned to Russia before joining the NPT in 1995.

Also on the positive side, the recent arms control agreement concluded between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce their deployments of strategic nuclear weapons has inspired new hopes that this progress may one day spill over into the realm of actual disarmament, transparency, and verification, while progressively incorporating new disarmament

commitments from other States that possess such weapons.

The fate of the world's tactical nuclear weapons also remains a subject of unfinished business on the global nuclear disarmament agenda. The world would especially welcome new initiatives with respect to the actual destruction of nuclear weapons, along with their fissile nuclear materials and delivery vehicles. I note in this respect that the Group of Eight Industrialized Countries announced at their recent Kananaskis Summit a ten-year, \$20 billion global partnership initiative to assist the Russian Federation and other countries in disarmament activities relating to weapons of mass destruction, and I would hope that the United Nations system will be involved in the implementation of these activities.

In other positive developments, eight States have signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty since the Conference last November on facilitating the Treaty's entry into force. This raises the total number of signatories to 166, 94 of which have ratified the Treaty. It is an encouraging sign of the support for this Treaty that new diplomatic efforts are under way to achieve this great goal.

I also welcome Cuba's recent decisions to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. These are two additional steps forward for the universality of the global norms of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Adding to this progress, Member State participation grew significantly last year in two important transparency measures offered by the United Nations — the Register of Conventional Arms and the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. So far, 77 States have reported data on their military expenditures — a 50 per cent increase since 2000 — and the 120 States that have reported data to the Register exceeds even last year's record level of participation. Through its work with interested Governments, its workshops and symposia and its publications, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has been working hard to achieve such results. I encourage all Member States that have not yet participated in these measures to do so, and I hope that one day all countries will join in sharing the benefits of confidence-building and transparency. I would like to take this occasion to note that South Africa has even enacted a law requiring its participation in the

Register — an example I hope other countries will follow in the years ahead.

With respect to small arms, Member States have been responding well to the Programme of Action adopted by the Small Arms Conference in July 2001. This includes their responses to the Secretariat's requests for national reports on their implementation activities, as well as some encouraging steps forward in monitoring compliance with Security Council arms embargoes, especially in Angola, Sierra Leone and several other African countries. The Group of Governmental Experts on Tracing of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons is well under way and is scheduled to complete its work in May 2003. While further strengthening the Secretary-General's Coordinating Action on Small Arms mechanism, the Department for Disarmament Affairs is also seeking extrabudgetary support to establish a small arms advisory service to assist in implementing the Programme of Action. Thanks to the combined efforts of Member States and persistent efforts by groups and individuals in civil society, it now appears that small arms are firmly planted on the multilateral arms control agenda, where the issue so obviously belongs.

The issue of landmines, the subject of nothing but bad news for so many years, is emerging as a success story for disarmament, although many additional efforts will still be needed in the years ahead to address this problem in many countries. There are now 129 States Parties to the Mine-Ban Convention and 66 States Parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. It is also noteworthy that both treaties expanded their memberships this year. In the interests of the innocent civilians who continue to die from landmines and the unexploded ordnance left as the legacy of armed conflicts, I salute the efforts now under way in the world community to address these serious challenges to human security.

Some other developments this year are, however, difficult to characterize as either progress or setbacks, since conditions remain highly variable. At the top of this list would be international efforts to reduce the risk of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction. With respect to activities within the Secretariat, the Secretary-General issued last month the report of his Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, which contained 31 recommendations for action against this global threat, including several

relating to disarmament. Recommendation 18, for example, urges the consideration of the establishment of a mechanism in the Department for Disarmament Affairs to monitor global developments in weapons of mass destruction terrorism, on the basis of open sources, and to submit a biennial report on the subject. The Department is now seeking support from private foundations and Member States so that it can fulfil such a role.

Yet, on the other hand, many of the important treaties that help to address this threat fall short of universal membership, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions. In addition, the twelve United Nations treaties on terrorism still do not have universal membership, while efforts have not yet succeeded with respect to concluding either a comprehensive convention against terrorism or a convention on the suppression of nuclear terrorism. With respect to improvements in nuclear safeguards, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency has recently lamented the fact that only 27 countries had brought into force additional protocols with the Agency. He has noted that much more needs to be done to upgrade the physical security of nuclear materials worldwide and to improve nuclear safety. He has also stressed that the Agency's funding levels are inadequate for many of its high-priority activities, including safeguards.

The collapse last year of long-standing efforts to conclude a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention was greeted with disappointment throughout the world community. It is a development that has set back disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorist efforts relating to those deadly weapons. The challenge facing all countries will be to ensure that the resumed Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention next November does not lapse into either a 10-minute revolving-door exercise or two weeks of mutual recrimination. Surely, the diplomatic skills of States Parties can devise alternative scenarios, agreeing on measures that can be accepted by all until the new Review Conference in 2006. A failure to achieve this compromise would be a betrayal of the hopes of the world in the face of persisting biological weapons threats from both States and terrorist groups.

The situation with respect to the resumption of weapons inspections in Iraq represents another challenge. It is gratifying to witness the outpouring of international support for the integrity of United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining to Iraq and for the need for full compliance with those resolutions. As a general principle, all disarmament obligations should, indeed, be rigorously enforced. Compliance is an absolutely vital issue for the effectiveness and credibility of disarmament activities. It is also a welcome development that the Government of Iraq has unconditionally agreed to the return of international inspectors. The sooner the world community can verify Iraq's compliance with its disarmament and other obligations under those resolutions, the sooner efforts can proceed towards implementing another goal found in those resolutions: the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, a goal that all States of the region have explicitly or implicitly endorsed.

There are two additional items on the agenda that continue to present daunting challenges: disarmament and non-proliferation education and missiles. Reports on those issues by panels of experts established by this Committee are now before you for action this year. With respect to the former, it is somewhat astonishing to see that disarmament and non-proliferation are receiving so little attention in educational systems around the world, considering the gravity of the problems they seek to address. The education report points the way for new efforts that can help remedy that situation and such efforts are surely needed by the next generation of world leaders and their fellow citizens.

With respect to missiles, it is gratifying to see that a panel of governmental experts from such a diverse group of countries has succeeded in reaching a consensus on a report on this subject, however thin the report may be on concrete recommendations. That there is such a report and that the General Assembly has placed missiles on its agenda are encouraging signs that the world community is slowly starting to rise to the challenge posed by the Secretary-General in 1999, when he called attention to the lack of multilateral norms in this field.

The fact that States are working on new confidence-building measures and on codes of conduct with respect to missile production, development and exports is encouraging, although, regrettably, there are

still few indications that such progress is extending into the realm of disarmament, where it is arguably needed most. Efforts are continuing, however, to achieve a ban on the weaponization of outer space. We need to insulate that arena from an arms race — just as we have done with the seabed and with Antarctica — and to protect the space assets of all nations in the interests of international peace and security.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs has paid particular attention to the gender dimension of disarmament. Members will recall that last year, in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, we produced a series of briefing notes on gender perspectives on disarmament. The Department intends to continue to pursue its commitment to gender mainstreaming and has undertaken to elaborate a gender action plan, the purpose of which will be to translate that concept into deeds.

There are other areas, however, where we have witnessed very little progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Those would include the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued non-compliance with its Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons safeguards obligations. Although the recent Pyongyang Declaration of Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea states that both countries will comply with all related international agreements, on 21 September the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference adopted a resolution noting with regret that discussions between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had yielded no substantive progress on important issues, including the preservation of information and the implementation of safeguards. We welcome the prospect of other bilateral dialogues making progress in that regard.

In South Asia, we were recently witness — once again — to nuclear dangers reminiscent of the Cuban missile crisis. And yet, foreign supplies continue to fuel the arms race in that region. Elsewhere, it is regrettable that the Pelindaba Treaty — the historic pact to ban the stationing of nuclear weapons on the African continent — still has only 13 parties. That is less than a quarter of the States that signed that Treaty, which has not had a new member since 1999.

My remarks would not be complete if I did not salute the non-governmental organizations that bravely continue to work for the cause of disarmament, despite a lack of resources, discriminatory rules of procedure in disarmament forums and active discouragement by some Governments.

It is impossible for me to cover all the issues that are on the agenda or, for that matter, all the issues that are not on the agenda but should be. What is most important is that we persist in our efforts to improve the conditions of international peace and security in this dangerously over-armed world. We will be judged, not by the awards we receive, but by the obstacles we overcome in that heroic pursuit. We should recall the words of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the distinguished former President of the General Assembly, who said, "The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war." Above all, we should never lose sight of the universal scope of the principles and values that lie at the heart of the peace and security system of the Charter of the United Nations — a system that recognizes the equality of all States under the rule of law, and whose subjects must understand that the best way to advance their own national interests is to advance the common interests of humanity.

Only two years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, we need also to be reminded of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century that were affirmed in the Millennium Declaration: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The realization of those principles and values are viscerally linked to the process of disarmament.

The Chairman: The Committee will now begin its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Mexican delegation, I am pleased to express the warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to thank you for your substantive opening message. Rest assured that you can count on our support during

the work of the Committee. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador André Erdős on his performance as Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I should also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for the important and useful introductory statement that he made a few moments ago, and especially for his call to have a productive session. Certainly, the state of the international disarmament agenda deserves that.

The year that has passed since we met in this forum at the beginning of October 2001 has been marked by the international fight against terrorism and by international efforts to prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to nuclear weapons and to other weapons of mass destruction. In that context, precisely when we should be redoubling our efforts to achieve the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons, to the contrary, disturbing doctrines have been developed that posit new uses for such weapons. Mexico reaffirms its strong commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, a constant priority of its foreign policy and a goal that the international community has pursued for decades.

As has been acknowledged, any presumption to indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the States that possess them is incompatible with the integrity and the sustainability of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as with the broader objective of maintaining international peace and security. On various occasions, Mexico has expressed its grave concern at the absence of meaningful efforts on the part of the five nuclear weapons States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, as well as at the alarming signs of the development of new generations of nuclear weapons.

That concern has increased because of the lack of concrete actions by India, Pakistan and Israel to become States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as well as of the impossibility of establishing nuclear-weapons-free zones in South Asia and in the Middle East.

Mexico supports the consolidation of the status of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapons-free State and encourages the efforts of the five Central Asian States aimed at the early conclusion of a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in that region.

In this sombre context, we cannot fail to welcome Cuba's recent announcement that it has decided to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Both measures undoubtedly further the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

However, the efforts of the international community to achieve nuclear disarmament cannot be limited to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Mexico believes that the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral forum for negotiation cannot and must not be called into question. We support the various proposals aimed at achieving agreement on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, which should unequivocally include the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

Mexico's unreserved support for the proposal that the Conference on Disarmament take up the issue of nuclear disarmament is reflected in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly in 1978, which, in Mexico's view, remains fully in effect. Paragraph 45 of that document states that top priority in disarmament negotiations shall be nuclear weapons.

Mexico had the honour to preside over the second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was held in this city in November 2001. The Final Declaration adopted at that Conference reaffirmed the commitment of the participants to the aims and purposes of the Treaty and to its early entry into force.

In the period following the Conference, Mexico, together with other States parties to the Treaty, promoted the entry into force of the Treaty. A detailed survey of those activities will be presented by the Mexican delegation at a meeting to be held parallel to the work of the First Committee. Mexico, in close coordination with the delegations of Australia and New Zealand, will also present the draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to be considered by the Committee.

Mexico welcomes the work done by the panel of governmental experts charged with preparing a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, pursuant to resolution 55/33 A. In particular, we wish to express

our appreciation to the delegation of Brazil, which, in its capacity as Chairman, contributed to the completion of the report. Despite the fact that it was not possible to present recommendations, this exercise was useful, since the issue was taken up in a United Nations forum for the first time. Mexico is convinced that the elaboration of legally binding international instruments on the issue of missiles in all its aspects should take place within a multilateral, universal and non-discriminatory framework.

Mexico continues to believe that the best way to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention would be through the negotiation of a verification protocol, as the international community has attempted to do over the past several years. However, despite this position of principle, we are aware of the difficulties that have arisen and are prepared to show flexibility in the search for a mechanism that would enable us to overcome the current impasse and achieve our objective. We commend the President of the Review Conference on his dedication and perseverance and encourage him to continue his efforts. At the same time, we invite all delegations to demonstrate a constructive spirit in the process.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the launching of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We are pleased to note that a large number of Member States have voluntarily provided information on their exports and imports of conventional arms during the period from 1992 to 2001. However, this confidence-building instrument has not achieved the desired universality, for reasons that have been considered by the various expert groups responsible for reporting on its maintenance and improvement.

These reasons include the inability of the expert groups to reach agreement on the inclusion of measures to ensure transparency in weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the original initiative under which the Register was established. The First Committee should perhaps reflect on the obstacles blocking the attainment of this goal in the context of the resolution traditionally submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands. The time may have come for Member States to consider new ways of fulfilling the commitment to achieving transparency in weapons of mass destruction.

The Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons made significant contributions to international humanitarian law by expanding the scope of application of the Convention and its Protocols to cover all situations of armed conflict and by reaffirming the intention to make continued progress on such issues as the explosive remnants of war, which today have proven to be the cause of great human suffering.

For the Government of Mexico, it is urgent that we give coordinated response to this humanitarian problem. We support an early start to the negotiation of a new protocol additional to the Convention that would prohibit or restrict the use of any munitions likely to become an explosive remnant of war that may cause humanitarian damage, taking an approach that strikes a balance between military exigencies and humanitarian consequences. Mexico will contribute to the adoption of an instrument with that objective at the Conference of States Parties to the Convention to be held next December.

Mexico will spare no effort in our collective fight to destroy and eliminate the threat posed by anti-personnel mines. My Government is convinced that only with a firm commitment on the part of the international community will we succeed in saving mankind from this scourge, and appeals to those States that are not yet parties to the Ottawa Convention to accede to that international legal instrument. We will continue actively to promote the universalization and effective implementation of the Convention and will be among the sponsors of the draft resolution to be considered by the First Committee on this subject.

According to the latest estimates published in the Small Arms Survey 2002, the number of small arms and light weapons worldwide has increased and has now reached some 640 million units. This growing trend has not been countered by the implementation of measures at the national, regional and international levels that were agreed to in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted by the United Nations Conference in 2001.

The excessive availability of this type of weapon is most evident in conflict zones. The various peacekeeping operations of the United Nations,

particularly in Africa, have included a disarmament component aimed at collecting and destroying the surplus of small arms and light weapons threatening the stability and security of countries that have emerged from conflict and entered the phase of peace-building. However, the responsibility for combating the illicit trade in and production of small arms and light weapons lies with all States, particularly the producing and importing States.

We have taken note of the various regional meetings and initiatives that have taken place since the United Nations Conference was held and we have participated actively in the so-called Franco-Swiss Initiative to elaborate a political strategy for the collection of small arms and light weapons by promoting at all times the transparency and openness of the process. We have also noted that one of the main impediments to the full implementation of the measures agreed to in the Programme of Action is insufficient international cooperation and assistance, despite the fact that the commitments made in this field are reflected in section III of the Programme.

Mexico wonders what accounting we will give to the Conference of States Parties in 2003 to review the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels. Should the current situation with respect to the lack of international financial aid flows to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continue, we will arrive at that Conference with a balance sheet of unequal implementation, in which the industrialized regions will flaunt the progress they have made while the regions of the developing world will have no reason to celebrate.

Mexico considers that the agenda of the Conference of the States Parties in 2003, in addition to reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action, should also take up those items that were not completed, such as the activities of intermediaries in international trade in small arms and light weapons, prohibition against their use by civilians, and prohibition of arms sales to non-State actors.

Two years have gone by since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by the General Assembly, and no significant progress has been made towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Differences persist among Member States on the convening of an international

conference, first proposed several years ago by the Secretary-General, to identify ways of eliminating nuclear threats. Mexico decided to promote this initiative in 2001, and it was received with major reservations by some of the nuclear-weapon States. It would appear that there are double standards in fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the Millennium Declaration by all Member States of the United Nations.

This notwithstanding, Mexico firmly believes that the Members of the Organization must have the opportunity to analyse the various disarmament issues in the light of the current international situation. This is an exercise that should have already taken place. We therefore support the call made by the Non-Aligned Movement to convene the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in the near future.

I cannot conclude this statement without referring to two additional initiatives taken up by Mexico at the current session. In a follow-up to resolution 55/33 E, entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", the Mexican delegation will submit a draft resolution on the report of the Group of Experts, chaired by Ambassador Miguel Marín-Bosch, which contains a set of recommendations to promote education in these fields.

We will also present a draft resolution concerning the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme, as a follow-up to resolution 55/34 A, in order to provide guidelines for the activities of the United Nations in this field.

Ms. Whelan (Ireland): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as Chair of this year's session of the First Committee of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank both you and Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for your thought-provoking statements.

I am honoured to make a contribution to the general debate on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, partners of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). I will, at the same time, give the Committee an overview of the NAC position on a number of issues that are detailed in the two draft resolutions which we will put forward at this session.

The first of these draft resolutions, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", builds on the previous work of the New Agenda Coalition, including at the 2000 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference and at last April's Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 Review Conference. As such, it represents a NAC contribution to the ongoing review process and to the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

It is the firm belief of the NAC that the horrific events that took place one year ago in this city have underlined the importance of the multilateral approach to disarmament. These events, and the possibility that terrorists could make use of weapons of mass destruction, have highlighted the importance of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. These attacks have been a wake-up call. It is time to take the necessary collective action in relation to nuclear disarmament.

In 1995, the NPT States Parties renewed their commitment to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective nuclear disarmament measures. By the time we reach the 2005 NPT Review Conference, a full decade will have passed. The undertakings made by States Parties at the 2000 NPT Review Conference have mapped out the practical steps through which such progress can be achieved. The ongoing NPT Preparatory Committee process provides a facilitating framework. We, as an international community, must take the agreed practical steps. Our continued indecision leaves us as vulnerable to a nuclear event as at any time in our history.

We believe that the first NAC draft resolution represents an opportunity to consolidate and to enhance the contribution that negotiated treaties can make to international nuclear security. We have already fallen behind in this endeavour. Now is the time to reinvigorate the wider nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation debate.

Without rehearsing the content of the initial NAC resolution, I urge like-minded States to join us: in calling upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to deal specifically with nuclear disarmament; in wishing to see the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enter into force as soon as possible with confirmation of the moratorium on all test explosions; in expressing deep

concern about the continued retention of the nuclear weapons option by the three States who have not yet acceded to the NPT, and calling on them to do so and bring into force full scope IAEA safeguards; in seeking the resumption of negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives; in wanting to prevent an arms race in outer space and calling on the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee to deal with this issue; and in calling on nuclear-weapon States to respect fully their existing commitments with regard to security assurances and for recommendations on this issue to be made to the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

Emerging approaches to the broader role of nuclear weapons, including the development of new types of nuclear weapons and new rationalizations for their use, give urgency to our concerns. There is an accumulation of nuclear risk. There is a disturbing trend of convergence between the possible deployment of tactical nuclear weapons and conventional ones. This trend is among the many horizontal and vertical pressures that are extending the range of nuclear and related threats that we face.

In an effort to highlight the particular threat posed by tactical nuclear weapons, we as NAC partners will put forward a second draft resolution on this topic. The draft resolution will include a call for the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons to be given priority and carried out in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. It will also include a call to further reduce the operational status of tactical nuclear weapons.

The NAC coalition strongly contends that it is not tenable to leave our internationally agreed nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation action strategies in open-ended abeyance. The two resolutions we are putting forward can act as a catalyst for meaningful progress and concrete action. They have the necessary operational flexibility to meet the concerns of all like-minded States. By way of a positive outcome to this session's debate, we invite like-minded States to support our draft resolutions in a spirit of shared global concern.

Finally, on behalf of the NAC, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the announcement of Cuba's intention to adhere to the NPT. At the same time, we welcome the agreement of Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon free zone in Central Asia.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): Congratulations on your election and on your eloquence earlier this morning when opening our proceedings, Mr. Chairman. In the weeks to come, we will do all we can to help you succeed.

We met a year ago in the shadow of a horror that made us all feel vulnerable to new threats to our security. Without a vote, we endorsed multilateralism as a core principle in our fight against terrorism. We knew that we had to make multilateralism work to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Now, after a year of drama — much of it sobering in our field — we meet again with the urgent responsibility of setting new standards for common, practical action to strengthen vital non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and procedures.

Many States have taken decisive action. For its part, the Group of Eight (G-8), meeting in Kananaskis, Canada, launched a Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction designed to prevent terrorists or those who harbour them from acquiring or developing nuclear, chemical, radiological or biological weapons, missiles and related materials, equipment and technology. The G-8 made a commitment to raise up to \$20 billion over the next 10 years in order to destroy chemical weapons, dismantle decommissioned nuclear submarines, dispose of fissile materials and employ former weapons scientists. G-8 leaders invited all other States to participate and contribute that also seek to promote the adoption, universalization and full implementation of multilateral treaties and international instruments designed to prevent the proliferation or illicit acquisition of weapons or materiel of mass destruction, missiles and related technology.

Foremost among these instruments is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Its universalization remains a key Canadian priority. That is why we were happy to welcome Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Those welcome steps reinforce rules-based multilateralism to contend with threats, old and new, to international security. Canada calls on India, Israel and Pakistan — States still outside the Treaty — to join.

A related high priority is enhanced accountability, the base on which the NPT was indefinitely extended seven years ago. At the Preparatory Committee meeting this spring, we emphasized the reporting requirement in the 13-step action plan agreed upon at the 2000 Review Conference. We are consulting with interested States parties and will address this subject in further preparations for the 2005 Review Conference. We should recall that at the heart of the NPT, non-proliferation and disarmament are bound one to the other. Canada thus welcomed the Treaty of Moscow, by which the United States and the Russian Federation, launching a new and very welcome security partnership and high-level dialogue through the Consultative Group for Strategic Security, agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We note that codification, verifiability, transparency and irreversibility set the highest standards by which the international community marks progress in this field.

We are also committed to a comprehensive nuclear test ban, which is essential to both non-proliferation and disarmament. Although several key States have yet to sign or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), encouraging progress has been achieved. Ninety-four States are on board and an impressive international monitoring system has been established to deter and detect explosive nuclear tests. We urge all States to ensure continued funding for the monitoring system and to support the Provisional Technical Secretariat's vital work. Of course, we also urge all States to sign and ratify the Treaty itself. Meanwhile, it is crucial that the moratorium on tests be sustained.

(spoke in French)

The events of last year surely strengthen the case for a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Canada will again this year seek the Committee's consensus support for the negotiation of an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament. Those events also clearly underscore the vital contribution of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We applaud its determined campaign to strengthen safeguards, and acknowledge the need for the Agency to have adequate resources to enable it to fulfil its mandate in this area. We also urge all States that have yet to do so to sign and implement comprehensive safeguards agreements and the IAEA's Additional Protocol. I should also like to point out that if we want to enhance our security we

should strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Other weapons of mass destruction pose an ominous threat. We are concerned that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) lacks the effective means to ensure compliance and that our sustained effort to negotiate a protocol to that end has so far been fruitless. At the resumed Review Conference next month, we would like to reaffirm that biological weapons are abhorrent, and we hope to plan concerted, cooperative and practical BWC implementation.

Another old threat — that of chemical weapons — still haunts us. Since we last met, the Chemical Weapons Convention has marked its fifth anniversary in force. The Convention is now supported by 146 States parties — a remarkable total — and there are good prospects for more adherents in the near future. Less encouraging, however, is the fact that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is still struggling to fulfil its vital mandate. Next month, States parties must ensure that that organization is provided with the resources that it still needs in order to do its job, in particular its verification and inspection work.

(spoke in English)

A year ago, we recognized anew that we needed multilateralism that worked, and disarmament and non-proliferation pacts that sustained confidence. That means transparency and verification. It also means effective action to ensure compliance. The headlines these days are all about our response to suspected violations. There is much at stake for the future of multilateral arms control. We all know that doing nothing is not an option. We also know, however, that we need to get it right. Canada favours collective action through the United Nations.

I have dealt so far with weapons of mass destruction. The fact is, however, that small arms and light weapons still do most of the killing, one by one. To stem the carnage, States convened last year to plan practical action through multilateral engagement to support regional and national efforts. It remains the responsibility of each State to implement the Programme of Action and thus protect millions around the world. Implementation will clearly also depend on sustained multilateral and regional cooperation, concerted political will and real resources.

In a few weeks' time we will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and On Their Destruction. Some 129 States are now on board, including many of the most mine-affected countries in the world. We want every State to join, and we want to sustain focus and action on the Convention's core humanitarian objectives: mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine-risk education and help for survivors.

We are determined as well to deal with other explosive remnants of war. Last December, States party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons took a key step forward, with an amendment to extend the scope of the Convention to armed conflict within, as well as between, States. I am pleased to say that Canada was the first State formally to accept this amendment. We hope other High Contracting Parties will follow suit, bringing the amended provisions into early force. We urge that they join us and many others in establishing a negotiating mandate on explosive remnants of war at this December's meeting on the Convention.

Finally, I draw attention to Canada's enduring commitment to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The risk inherent in any notion of war in space, of a "Tragedy of the Commons", is utterly compelling. A belt of debris in the wake of such war would forever deprive humanity of the immense economic, social and security benefits of the peaceful use of outer space. We will support the peaceful uses of space here and we will keep pressing to deal with its non-weaponization at the Conference on Disarmament.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to pay tribute to the contribution to our deliberations of civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a vital role in research, analysis and information sharing. Our work would be virtually impossible in this day and age without them. Canada consults systematically with national and international NGOs. We welcome and value their interest and active support.

The responsibility we share in this First Committee is compelling. As you, Mr. Chairman, and Under-Secretary Dhanapala have emphasized, our responsibility is to achieve results. It is to build and defend a universal framework of indivisible, sustainable security, to protect the credibility and enhance the effective force of multilateral agreements.

It is not just to yearn for security; it is to plan and to act to make it happen, to make it real.

Mr. Nielsen (Denmark): Allow me to congratulate you most sincerely on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that you will guide us through the Committee's work in an excellent way, and I wish to assure you of the wholehearted support of the European Union (EU) in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

I have the honour to speak here on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta have expressed their wish to align themselves with the statement I am about to make. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European economic area, also endorse this statement.

More than a year has now passed since the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States of America on 11 September 2001. Thousands of innocent people became victims of terrorism and many died in a selfless and heroic effort to save the lives of others. It is with deep sorrow that we remember that tragic day. Our thoughts go to the bereaved families and friends in the United States and throughout the world who were stricken by the violence unleashed a year ago.

The security and stability of the international community is being challenged, both globally and regionally, by the risks brought about by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The terrorist attacks of 11 September have given an even greater sense of urgency to the common efforts required from all States to prevent these weapons and their means of delivery from reaching the hands of terrorist groups.

The EU responded quickly to the challenge of international terrorism. On 21 September 2001, the Extraordinary European Council adopted conclusions and a plan of action in order to give the necessary impetus to the EU's actions to combat terrorism. On 10 December 2001 the EU Council of Ministers launched a targeted initiative within the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control to counter the threat of terrorism. To add further substance and direction to the Initiative, the Council of Ministers

adopted a list of concrete measures in April 2002. This list identifies four areas of action: review and strengthening of relevant multilateral instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and export control; full implementation of export controls; international cooperation in the field of protection and assistance against the use or threat of use of chemical and biological weapons; and enhanced political dialogue with third countries in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The EU supports wholeheartedly the objectives laid down in the Treaty and is committed to the effective implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and of the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The EU welcomes the work of the first Preparatory Committee meeting, held in New York in April 2002 and calls on all States to make a success of the preparatory meetings leading up to the Review Conference in 2005. The preparatory work should be a balanced exercise, paying due attention to all aspects of the Treaty's implementation: nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Union welcomes the announcement of the signature by the United States and the Russian Federation of a new Treaty on the reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals. In this context, the principles of irreversibility and transparency remain important. This Treaty is a step forward and a positive contribution to the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The EU hopes that it will be followed by other initiatives to strengthen international security and stability.

The European Union continues to attach special importance to achieving universal adherence to the NPT. The EU therefore welcomes the recent announcement by Cuba that it intends to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and calls upon those States not yet parties to the NPT to accede as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The importance and urgency of continuing the signing and ratification process of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in order to enable its entry into force as soon as possible, was underlined in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The Union wishes to reiterate that it spares no effort in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty and universal accession to it. It is with this in mind that the Union expresses its full support for the rapid establishment and for the operation of the verification regime. To ensure that the resolve of the international community does not weaken, it calls on all those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT, without delay and without conditions, in particular those States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force.

The negotiation at the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices constitutes an essential stage in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The European Union regrets that a consensus has not yet been reached in the Conference on Disarmament in order to launch the negotiation under the mandate approved in 1995 and in 1998. We reiterate our call to the members of the Conference to make every effort to attain the objective as soon as possible.

The EU has stated that the so-called Amorim proposal contains elements for a rapid agreement if all members of the Conference on Disarmament display a spirit of openness and pragmatism. In this respect, the Union restates its view that the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference should begin without delay, on the basis of mandates which are sufficiently pragmatic and broad to be the subject of an agreement. This work should, furthermore, cover the fissile material cut-off treaty, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

It is regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has now finished its fourth consecutive year without consensus on a work programme. The EU, however, welcomes the fact that new and creative ideas for a work programme have been put forward during this year's sessions of the Conference, including a cross-group effort and other efforts by EU Member States to develop a work programme. The EU hopes

such initiatives will receive constructive attention from all Conference delegations in the coming months, hopefully enabling us to start substantive work in the Conference from the outset of the first session of 2003.

Furthermore, the European Union would like to recall its attachment to the follow-up on the enlargement process of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and arms control. The follow-up on this process is of great importance, in particular to those members of the European Union that are not yet members of the Conference, as well as the associated countries with the Union, which have submitted their request for admission to the Conference.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) international safeguards system is the fundamental pillar of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We share the concerns of the IAEA and regret that 48 States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have not yet entered into comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA. We call upon those States to fulfil their obligations in accordance with article III of the Treaty and to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as a matter of urgency.

The EU considers the Additional Protocols to be an integral part of the IAEA safeguards system. The Union accords a high priority to the implementation of an additional protocol by all States concerned. We therefore urge those States to conclude and implement an additional protocol as soon as possible. All member States of the EU have committed themselves to have their additional protocols enter into force simultaneously, and we aim to do so as soon as possible.

The EU wishes to recall its concern regarding the continued existence of non-safeguarded nuclear facilities and material in States not party to the NPT or equivalent treaties. The EU appeals to all States not party to the NPT to place all their nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards.

The European Union believes that the creation of internationally recognized nuclear-weapons-free zones, based on arrangements freely concluded between the States of the region, strengthens regional and global peace and security. We welcome and support the signature and ratification by the nuclear-weapons

States of the relevant Protocols on nuclear-weapons-free zones. We look forward to the entry into force of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty at an early date, and welcome the news of the Central Asian States working on a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

In the same context, we repeat our appeal to the countries of South Asia to make every effort to prevent an arms race in the region. We continue to urge India and Pakistan to cooperate with the efforts of the international community to strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We repeat our call to them to implement the specific measures set out in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), in particular accession to the NPT, and signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Both countries have declared moratoria on nuclear testing and a willingness to participate in the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We call on them to take all necessary measures towards fulfilling their stated intention.

While we note with interest the commitment made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at Pyongyang on 17 September that it would comply with all related international agreements in the nuclear field, we remain seriously concerned by its continuing failure to implement fully its binding safeguards agreement with the IAEA. We deplore the lack of tangible progress made on important verification issues over the past year. The EU urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to work with the IAEA to implement the specific verification steps proposed last year without further delay and to achieve full compliance with its safeguards agreement. The European Union repeats its appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign and ratify unconditionally the CTBT without delay. Finally, the European Union also notes with interest the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's stated intention of continuing its moratorium on missiles and expresses its concern with regard to its exports of missiles and missile technology.

The EU remains committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on the Middle East and the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. We continue to support efforts to establish an effectively verifiable Middle East zone that is free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Furthermore,

we call on all States in the region that have not done so to conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA, to negotiate such agreements and bring them into force as soon as possible. The European Union believes that the accession of all States in the region to the conventions banning chemical and biological weapons and to the NPT would make an essential and extremely significant contribution to peace and to regional and global security.

It remains a matter of major concern to the EU that three and a half years have passed since the IAEA has been able to implement its mandate in Iraq under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and that the Agency remains unable to provide any assurances regarding Iraq's compliance with its obligations under those resolutions. We note with interest that Iraq's Foreign Minister, in a letter dated 16 September 2002 addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General, announced the decision of the Iraqi Government to let the weapons inspectors return to Iraq. The EU strongly urges Iraq to implement, without conditions, in full and without any delays, all relevant Security Council resolutions and to take steps to enable the IAEA and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) to carry out its mandate in the country.

The European Union is deeply concerned about the growing proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. The EU sees an urgent need for the development of globally accepted norms and practices in support of ballistic missile non-proliferation. The International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (ICOC) will be an important first step towards the integration of ballistic missiles into the multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The Code also confirms the commitment by subscribing States to the United Nations Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States. The European Union (EU) is prepared to work together with other subscribing States to further develop the Code.

The EU has supported, from the very beginning, the drafting of an international code. The EU is aware that the Code is not, and was never meant to be, the only missile initiative in existence. The EU would welcome increased United Nations involvement in the missile issue. Therefore, we welcome the conclusion of

the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles that "It is essential to have continued international efforts to deal with the issue of missiles" (A/57/229, p. 20). It is, however, also important to achieve quick results of a truly substantive nature. We think that the ICOC is the most concrete and advanced initiative in this field. The European Union urges all States to attend the ICOC launching conference, to be held from 25 to 26 November at The Hague, and to join the Code.

The European Union considers the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to be a unique instrument for a complete ban on chemical weapons and for their destruction under international verification. The European Union has carried out démarches to promote universal adherence by the States that have yet to sign and ratify the Convention. The European Union also recalls the importance of articles IV and V of the Convention, obliging relevant States to destroy 100 per cent of their chemical weapons and their chemical weapons production facilities no later than 10 years after the entry into force of the Convention.

The European Union calls on all States Parties concerned to do everything possible to ensure compliance with the prescribed deadlines. We are fully aware of the Russian Federation's application of a revised delayed draft plan for destruction of its chemical weapons. The European Union stresses the importance of ensuring that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and all Member States are provided with the relevant information to allow decisions on such new deadlines.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention represents a key instrument to prevent biological agents or toxins from being used as weapons. The total ban on such weapons of mass destruction becomes especially important in the light of their actual use for terrorist purposes over the past year. The European Union attaches high priority to the strengthening of the Convention and to a successful outcome of the Fifth Review Conference when it resumes in November. Member States of the EU have considered the issue of national compliance and legislative and regulatory implementation measures, and they support proposals to strengthen such measures. The Union presented proposals to that effect, as well as on confidence-building and on non-compliance clarification and investigation during the first part of the Fifth Review Conference, in November 2001. The European Union

believes that such proposals could be agreed for a follow-up process to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention when the Review Conference resumes. The Union is consulting with States parties for a consensus along those lines at the Review Conference and encourages other States Parties to take a similar approach.

The events of 11 September 2001 highlighted the importance of efficient export control measures. The European Union finds it essential that all exporting States assume their responsibilities and take measures to ensure that exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies are subject to appropriate surveillance and control. Export controls ensure that transfers take place for peaceful purposes, as required by the relevant conventions and treaties, while facilitating cooperation and technological development.

In that context, the European Union supports the efforts of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement — of which all European member States are members — to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of their means of delivery and, in the case of the Wassenaar Arrangement, to promote transparency and greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional arms and of dual-use goods and technologies.

The European Union played an active part in the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as in the elaboration of the United Nations Programme of Action, in the negotiations on the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and in the adoption of the document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on small arms and light weapons. The European Union stresses the need for prompt implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The European Union had hoped for a stronger Programme of Action on certain points. Therefore, the Union is committed to an effective, ambitious and continuous follow-up process leading through the 2003 and 2005 Conferences to the following Review Conference in 2006. The 2003 Conference will be the

first occasion to take stock of progress — or the lack thereof — in the implementation of the Programme of Action. However, taking stock must be a dynamic process in which there is room for making proposals to strengthen and to develop the measures contained in the Programme of Action. Only by using the two biannual conferences and the time between them will we be able to prepare appropriately for a successful 2006 Review Conference.

The European Union Joint Action on small arms and light weapons constitutes the overall framework of EU policy within that field. The EU Joint Action stipulates a set of principles and measures that the EU will pursue in relevant international forums and in a regional context, and it contains provisions for technical and financial assistance. In July 2002, its scope of application was extended to include ammunition. The EU intends to continue its support through aid to affected States, aiming at, inter alia, the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons. Information on the implementation of the EU Joint Action can be found in the second annual report, which will soon be published. The report gives an overview of the efforts of the EU and of its Member States, but it also contains reflections on priorities for future assistance by the European Union.

Responsibility with regard to arms transfer policies is essential in addressing the problem of small arms. The Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, approved by the EU Council on 8 June 1998, establishes the criteria for conventional arms transfers and provides for consultation procedures to promote the convergence of national arms export policies. Each year, the European Union publishes a report on the application of the Code by member States. This year's report will be marked by increased transparency achieved through better and more comprehensive statistical data and a compendium of agreed practices related to the Code. Among the items covered are exports of equipment for humanitarian purposes, control of arms-brokering activities, requirements of end-user certificates, transit and the production of military goods under licence.

The European Union underlines the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms — which has its tenth anniversary this year — not only as a global confidence-building measure to support stability and security, but also as a measure encouraging regional efforts aimed at greater

transparency. The value of the Register will be increased through the greatest possible participation.

The Union reiterates its call on all States to submit timely returns of their imports and exports to the Register, including — to further increase transparency and strengthen the value of the Register — information on military holdings and procurement through national production. The European Union also reiterates its support for an expanded Register, for its scope to be extended as quickly as possible and for its universalization.

The ratification or accession of almost 130 States to the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines leaves no doubt that an international norm has been established that can no longer be ignored. The European Union remains strongly committed to promoting the global eradication of anti-personnel mines and will continue to campaign for a universal and swift application of the Convention. The European Union urges non-signatories to accede to the Convention without delay; among them are some of the biggest and most populated countries in the world, within which huge stocks of anti-personnel mines are still stored. Furthermore, the European Union calls upon non-State actors as well to abide by the principles of the Convention and to comply with them.

The Convention laid down strict time limits for the destruction of stocks and for the clearance of mined areas. Even though the Convention gives some degree of flexibility, we must all do our utmost to achieve the objectives within the set deadlines of the Convention. Compliance with the Convention and humanitarian mine activities are mutually reinforcing. In this regard, the European Union will work for a strengthening of international coordination and cooperation within humanitarian mine action as a whole.

The European Union will, although moved primarily by humanitarian concerns, give priority to directing its aid towards those States parties that put the Convention's principles and objectives into practice. Apart from some exemptions in the Convention, the European Union regards the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, whatever the context or reasons, as banned by the Convention. By pledging a total of 240 million euros in support of mine action for the period 2002-2009, the European Union stands ready to contribute to anti-personnel mine efforts.

The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) is an important instrument. During the Second Review Conference last year, the States parties were able to agree upon several important steps. The most important of these was, of course, the extension of the Convention's scope of application to cover not only international armed conflicts but also conflicts not of an international character. The Union is highly satisfied with this achievement. In our opinion, it is therefore of the utmost importance that all States parties adhere to the amended Article I as soon as possible.

Another achievement was the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts to consider further measures to address the issues of "Explosive remnants of war", "Mines other than anti-personnel mines", and "Options to promote compliance with the CCW".

A number of proposals and ideas have already been formulated throughout the meetings of the Group this year. These ideas will have to be examined at the Meeting of the States Parties to the CCW in December next.

The European Union is particularly concerned by the serious problems caused by the explosive remnants of war and the humanitarian and social consequences of the presence of unexploded ordnance. It is therefore the strong wish of the European Union that the Group of Governmental Experts on the Explosive Remnants of War will soon be able to start negotiating a legally binding instrument.

Furthermore, the Union remains concerned about the serious humanitarian problems caused by the irresponsible use of anti-vehicle (AV) mines as well as the use of sensitive types of AV mines, for which appropriate measures should be considered in order to reduce the risks these types of weapons might pose to civilians. The European Union supports the development of a legally binding instrument that should include provisions on the detectability and technological improvement of remotely delivered AV mines.

The European Union urges nations not to relax their efforts to achieve the fundamental objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral efforts must continue; indeed, they must be stepped up. The European Union trusts that this session of the First

Committee will contribute to that goal in accordance with the Organization's mission: the consolidation of peace and security through international cooperation.

The Chairman: I should like to remind delegations kindly to limit their statements to 10 minutes, as agreed, in order to enable the Committee to hear all speakers inscribed on the list.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, I support your proposal that we limit our statements to 10 minutes. I promise that I will speak for less than 10 minutes.

First of all, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election, and to extend these congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

A year ago, this Committee began its work at a time when we were still reeling from the terrorist attacks that shook New York and the world. Those attacks proved that the world is facing a new threat to international security, namely, asymmetrical conflict.

Asymmetrical conflict renders useless defence concepts that base security on huge and expensive nuclear and conventional weapons systems — systems that in no way deter terrorism. Neither aircraft carriers, nor ballistic missiles, nor tanks, nor great armies work in this context. They work even less for the poor countries, where social exclusion and the feeling of losing one's dignity can spawn subversion and perhaps terrorism.

Insofar as Latin America is concerned, for instance, the possibility of war among Latin American States has practically disappeared. I wonder if we could not turn our armed forces into smaller and more operational forces that would serve to meet new threats to security such as asymmetrical conflict, internal subversion, drug trafficking and the increasingly frequent natural disasters in our part of the world, and prepare our armed forces for undertaking civic and social action as well as participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

For all of these reasons, Peru has been playing a leading role in promoting a series of initiatives at the subregional and regional levels designed to reduce military expenditures for the purposes I have mentioned. First among these initiatives proposed by my country was the creation of an Andean zone of peace. On 17 July 2002, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela adopted the Lima Commitment,

establishing the Andean Charter for Peace and Security, and committing these five countries to working jointly for the limitation and control of military spending.

This is a substantial step forward, requiring the formulation of a common Andean security policy to include limits on the expenditures for external defence, controls regarding conventional weapons and increased measures of transparency.

Our second proposal was the creation of a South American zone of peace and cooperation, approved on 27 July of this year by the Presidents of the 12 countries of the South American subcontinent. We hope that this fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly will pick up on this initiative and that it will receive the recognition and cooperation of all the Member States of this Organization in order to attain the goals of disarmament, security and development that we have posited.

The third proposal we have put forward involves reducing defence expenditures. We have raised this with our friends around the region, the goal being to reorient the funds so as to free them up for poverty eradication and for social development, thus increasing, above all, health and education budgets.

This initiative has drawn support at various regional and subregional forums, such as through a resolution adopted by the Organization of American States, in the Ministerial Declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban and in the latest declarations by the heads of State and Government of the Rio Group in Santiago and in San José, Costa Rica.

These latter declarations reflect the backing for the proposal to gradually and effectively reduce defence expenditures, to permit using the funds involved to fight poverty. It was urged that this advance be expanded at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. Peru will comply by taking the steps necessary for turning this proposal into reality.

The fourth initiative involved negotiating a zone from which missiles would be banned across Latin America, with the goal of strengthening security in the region. This proposal includes not only air-to-air missiles, but also long- and medium-range missiles. Again, the point is to strengthen security throughout the entire region.

An ad hoc meeting of experts will shortly take place in Lima. We hope to have present there all the countries of the region to analyse this proposal and its scope.

Finally, the fifth proposal put forward is that of further strengthening the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to turn it into a focal point for all these region-wide initiatives. With this in mind, we hope that the Organization will grant the Centre greater resources.

I wish to conclude my remarks by reaffirming that my country sees this Committee as playing the role of a forum appropriate for dialogue and debate on disarmament and arms control. In this sense, we reiterate Peru's commitment to total cooperation in the work we will be doing this year.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to the members of your Bureau on their election. I am confident that that, given your vast experience and expertise, you will be able to steer the deliberations of this Committee to a successful conclusion. We warmly welcome the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste in our deliberations.

My delegation's appreciation also goes to your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdős of Hungary, for the outstanding manner in which he guided the work of this Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The representative of Myanmar will be making a statement later on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, to which my delegation fully associates itself, but I would like to take this opportunity to make some brief remarks on issues of particular interest to Malaysia.

My delegation views with concern the lack of real progress in nuclear disarmament over the past year. The situation is made more alarming by the changed international climate, characterized by the steady erosion of the multilateral process during the same period. This negative development in the international security situation is acknowledged by the Secretary-General himself who, in his report to the General Assembly, observed that little cooperation in the field of disarmament was achieved this past year. Tens of

thousands of nuclear weapons continue to be stockpiled in the arsenals of the nuclear Powers, while progress in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament remains negligible. It is important that we should not be lulled into complacency just because the cold war is over; the threat of nuclear war between nuclear-armed States in our contemporary world has not disappeared. Indeed, in some situations, and in the context of emerging security doctrines, the risks of armed conflict involving nuclear weapons may even have increased. Therefore, every effort should be made by the international community not to lower its vigilance and to press ahead towards achieving the ultimate goal of the elimination of these horrendous weapons of mass destruction.

In April 2002, the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held. My delegation would like to congratulate Ambassador Hendrik Salander of Sweden for the effective manner in which he conducted the work of that meeting. The meeting was held against the backdrop of the formulation of a new Nuclear Posture Review by a nuclear weapon State, which expands the role of nuclear weapons beyond their essentially deterrent function, with grave implications to international peace and security. This Nuclear Posture Review is perceived by many as a clear rejection of the 13 steps agreed upon by the nuclear weapon States at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Malaysia is very much disappointed and dismayed at these developments and urges all nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty not to renege on their undertakings made two years ago, as that would deal a serious blow to the viability of the Treaty and to the disarmament process in general.

My delegation hopes that serious efforts will be made to give substance to these undertakings, as we begin to prepare for next NPT Preparatory Committee in Geneva and the Review Conference in 2005. In the current volatile political climate, it is imperative that we strive for the Treaty's continued viability. This can be ensured only through concrete outcomes of the review process premised on the fulfilment by States parties of all of their Treaty commitments. Any divergence from these commitments would further undermine the NPT.

In order to ensure the continued viability of the Treaty and the multilateral disarmament process, a

more cooperative attitude must be manifested by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. There should be increased readiness on their part to account for actions taken by them in fulfilment of their Treaty commitments. The onus for the continued viability and success of the NPT is on them, not on the non-nuclear-weapon States, which have long fulfilled their part of the bargain.

The NPT has been universally accepted as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, but regrettably its universality continues to remain elusive. We continue to believe in the critical importance of the universality of the Treaty. Malaysia therefore warmly welcomes the announcement by Cuba to accede to the Treaty and to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This important decision by Cuba, taken in spite of the current negative trends on the disarmament scene, reflects the positive and constructive orientation of the Government of Cuba on the nuclear disarmament issue. It is a clear affirmation by a non-Treaty State of its belief in the viability of the NPT and the continued relevance of the non-proliferation regime. We earnestly hope that the Cuban decision and final action to accede to the NPT will strongly encourage the three remaining non-Treaty States — Israel, India and Pakistan — to re-examine their position and to contribute towards the early realization of the universality of the Treaty.

Malaysia is encouraged by the continued positive response by countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We hope that this positive trend will solidify the norms against nuclear proliferation and further development of nuclear weapons. Malaysia would strongly urge the 13 remaining countries to respond to the appeal by the Secretary-General to accede to and ratify the CTBT, pursuant to article XIV, so as to effect its entry into force as soon as possible.

While Malaysia is gratified with its membership in the Conference on Disarmament, we are disappointed and disheartened with regard to the continuing impasse in the Conference. Its continued deadlock would undermine further whatever credibility the Conference on Disarmament may still have as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We strongly urge the President of the Conference on Disarmament and the three special coordinators designated by it to make every effort to break the

impasse and move the negotiations forward. In the current context, there is a need to manifest renewed faith in the multilateral disarmament process, as represented by the Conference on Disarmament, by a more determined effort to begin to address the critical issues on its agenda.

Last year we witnessed a serious challenge to the validity and viability of multilateral disarmament diplomacy. The international community has yet to fully recover from the shock following the demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, in the wake of the withdrawal of the United States from that Treaty. The Moscow Treaty, signed between the United States and Russia following the abrogation of the ABM Treaty, will not be able to replace that Treaty, because while it was viewed as a step towards reducing the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons, it did not address the issue of irreversibility and the verification of nuclear disarmament. My delegation is of the view that the abrogation of the ABM Treaty will have grave consequences for future progress in arms control and non-proliferation efforts and, inevitably, the future of international security.

We were also dismayed at the suspension last year of the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). This was another disappointing setback in the multilateral disarmament process in the past few years. We hope that the cooling off period will enable the States parties to the Convention to continue their important work towards reaching an agreement on a Final Declaration to strengthen the BWC.

My delegation welcomes the tenth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We continue to support international efforts to promote transparency and confidence-building measures among States. With the advent of new and highly sophisticated technologies in the conventional weapons industry, the danger posed by conventional weapons has become even more acute. It is very disheartening to observe that in a number of armed conflicts in the developing world, including in Africa, highly sophisticated and expensive conventional weapons have been used in spite of the crushing poverty there. The adoption of a Programme of Action at the end of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a significant step towards achieving the goal of preventing, combating

and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is our fervent hope that States will fulfil their respective obligations under the Programme of Action. My delegation believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be viewed from the holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its strong commitment to the purposes and intent of the Ottawa Convention. Malaysia has completed the destruction of its small stockpile of anti-personnel landmines and has thus promptly fulfilled its obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. We are also committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban on anti-personnel landmines. It remains our hope and expectation that there will a stronger political push for universal acceptance of that Treaty. In this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties, held recently in Geneva.

Malaysia views the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an integral part of the quest to free the world from nuclear weapons, as well as to promote regional peace and stability. Having worked tirelessly with its Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) partners for the establishment of the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Malaysia looks forward to the continuation of direct consultations between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States in the first half of 2003, with a view to encouraging the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty Protocol. My delegation also attaches great importance to the promotion of such zones and strongly supports their establishment in other parts of the world, particularly in West Asia and the Middle East, as called for in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and reconfirmed at the 2000 Review Conference.

The establishment of such a zone in the region is particularly pertinent in the context of the prevailing volatile political and security environment there. We would also strongly encourage the establishment of such a zone in South Asia, given the perilous situation there, which the Secretary-General himself identified, in his recent address to the General Assembly, as one of the "four current threats to world peace" (A/57/PV.2).

We welcome the progress that has been made by the countries of Central Asia, whose expert group has agreed on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their subregion, which the Under-Secretary-General has just highlighted.

The historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons, of July 1996, remains an important milestone in the global campaign for nuclear disarmament. We regret that the important Opinion of the World Court continues to be ignored by the nuclear-weapon States. Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue to pursue follow-up actions to the Advisory Opinion of the Court at this and future sessions of the General Assembly. We hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution will continue to enjoy wide support from States Members of this Organization. We trust that this initiative will contribute towards keeping the focus on nuclear disarmament and on the final and achievable goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.

Finally, my delegation wishes to pay the highest tribute to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the able and effective leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala. We thank him for his thoughtful statement this morning and for the important work carried out by the Department in promoting the disarmament agenda of the United Nations. We also strongly support the appeal by the Secretary-General to rededicate ourselves to multilateral approaches to disarmament. In spite of — indeed, because of — the recent and current setbacks in the multilateral disarmament process, the multilateral search for genuine measures of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must remain high on the global disarmament agenda. The Department for Disarmament Affairs has an important role to play in that effort. We are confident that, under Mr. Dhanapala's leadership, the Department will continue to play a supportive and catalytic role in the service of the States Members of this Organization.

In conclusion, Malaysia would urge the international community to support and respond positively to the call by the Secretary-General during the Millennium Summit for the convening of an international conference to consider all aspects of the nuclear-weapons issue. Against the backdrop of the current negative trends in the global security

environment, the convening of such a conference would be most timely indeed.

The Chairman: May I once again appeal to delegations to limit their statements to 10 minutes, not only to permit other inscribed speakers to speak, but also to enable this meeting to conclude its deliberations by 1 p.m.

Ms. Panckhurst (New Zealand): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the Chair. You have New Zealand's full cooperation in what we hope will be a productive session.

The fragility of international security was all too well demonstrated to us last year with the terrorist attacks on this, our host city and country. The events of 11 September and threats of possible use of weapons of mass destruction serve to remind us that, here in the First Committee, there can be no room for complacency in our work.

New Zealand has consistently sought to push the disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agenda forward. Now, during this time of increased uncertainty, is not a time when States should be pulling back from multilateral initiatives. Instead, we should be reinvigorating these efforts. As New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Phil Goff, said during this year's General Assembly debate, "It is essential that we renew our commitment to multilateralism as the best way to address global problems." (A/57/PV.7) In other words, collective problems require collective solutions.

At the cornerstone of New Zealand's disarmament policy is a drive for a world free of nuclear weapons. We have continued to work with our New Agenda Coalition partners towards real and substantive action being taken on the 13 steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this regard, we welcome the news of Cuba's intention to accede to the NPT and urge those few countries still outside the Treaty to follow Cuba's example and accede as non-nuclear weapon States as soon as possible.

As already outlined by the Ambassador of Ireland, the New Agenda Coalition this year will be proposing two draft resolutions. The first draft resolution, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", outlines the

necessary steps to confront the threats that are posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This draft resolution is not only an opportunity for States to demonstrate commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons; it presents also an opportunity to demonstrate that the First Committee's work is relevant and useful. It is a comprehensive account of progress to date on nuclear disarmament negotiations and, furthermore, sets out a plan for future action. In 2000, much of this plan gained the support of 187 States.

An important step in the programme of action agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference was the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons. The second draft resolution that has been tabled by the Ambassador of Ireland on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition will, we hope, be the first move towards addressing this important issue. In some respects, short-range tactical nuclear weapons pose a greater threat than strategic weapons, as there is a real risk that tactical nuclear weapons could be launched by accident or in the confusion of war, with no time available for communication between opposing sides. There are, worries, too about the security of tactical nuclear weapons.

The first and crucial step of the programme of action agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference — the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — is still not within sight. The CTBT is a contribution towards the systematic reduction of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear proliferation by ridding the world of nuclear-weapons test explosions. The failure so far to bring into force this fundamental step towards non-proliferation and disarmament threatens to undermine the credibility of disarmament negotiations.

New Zealand declared itself and its waters a nuclear-weapon-free zone in 1987 with the passage of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act. The South Pacific is also a nuclear-weapon-free zone and there are other nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world. We support Brazil's initiative to join the nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere to create a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons. This is in no way an attempt to impinge on the rights all States enjoy under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, but would comprise a positive act of common purpose.

Just over a year ago, in this city, the international community agreed on a Programme of Action to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. New Zealand supported this Programme of Action and we remain firm in our commitment to tackle the flow of these weapons around the world. Small arms and light weapons are real-time killers and they pose grave humanitarian, development and social challenges. New Zealand supports the implementation of the provisions set out in the Programme of Action and we are working with partners in our region towards this end.

It is an issue of deep concern to New Zealand that the preparations for the resumed Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, scheduled to take place in November this year, are in difficulty. States have negotiated for years towards the development and implementation of a compliance mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention. The technology and science that feeds into biosecurity and bioterrorism is being rapidly developed. But while the United Nations is still struggling to identify and to eliminate biological weapons developed in one State — and we have witnessed the use of biological weapons in another State — we have been unable to bring the negotiations for a system of verification and compliance to completion.

The year 2002 has been a challenging one for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The process of changing the leadership of the Technical Secretariat was a difficult one for all of us, but we are confident that the new Director-General, Rogelio Pflirer of Argentina, has the skills to take the OPCW forwards. He has made a fine start.

Next year is expected to present challenges as well. Member States must seize the opportunity to be provided by the First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention in order to give tangible effect to our determination, for the sake of all humankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons. That is surely our task, and we should not fool ourselves that it is complete.

It continues to be a major disappointment to New Zealand that yet again the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on a programme of work. It is a great pity that linkages between issues should be allowed to hold the Conference to ransom. At a time

when other international organizations have opened to the participation of non-governmental organizations and broadest memberships, we find the Conference out of step with reality and with the aspirations of civil society.

In direct contrast to the Conference on Disarmament is the Ottawa Convention banning the use of anti-personnel mines. New Zealand remains a steadfast supporter of the Ottawa Convention. The cooperative and constructive spirit in which States Parties and non-governmental organizations have come together to work towards the total elimination of anti-personnel mines is heartening, and it shows that when States are determined, progress can be achieved. New Zealand, along with Australia, continues to work with Pacific Island Countries to achieve the complete universalization of the Convention in the South Pacific. Anti-personnel mines are not employed in the South Pacific. So, we have some administrative tidying to do.

While we can take satisfaction from the work that has been done on anti-personnel mines, there remains much to do on explosive remnants of war. Those objects are often a direct danger to life and limb and an obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian aid, the cultivation of agricultural land and the rebuilding of communities devastated by war. In the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, New Zealand strongly supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva.

Finally, New Zealand is a strong supporter of the United Nations Experts Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education. Ms. Kate Dewes, Vice-President of the International Peace Bureau, was appointed by the Secretary-General as the New Zealand expert on the Group. We are convinced that the dissemination of information on disarmament and the raising of awareness about disarmament in general are essential in order to ensure that future generations steer our world away from conflict and towards peace.

Mr. Gousous (Jordan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and wish you every success in discharging the task with which you have been entrusted. We have every confidence in your ability to fulfil your responsibilities. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Hungary for his distinguished efforts as Chairman of the First

Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The terrorist attacks on the United States a year ago caused immense tragedy and destruction. Those acts, by targeting innocent civilians and civilian structures, not only challenged our sense of security but also outraged our conscience. Those acts make the work of the United Nations for peace, disarmament, non-proliferation and security more important than ever. They should lead us to renew our adherence to the body of disarmament and arms control agreements.

The First Committee meets this year, with remarkable achievements, as well as serious challenges, in the field of international security and disarmament. On one side of the balance sheet is the ratification by 82 States party to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the continued work of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention Ad Hoc Group aiming at establishing a verification and compliance regime for the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention; the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention by 165 States, 146 of which have deposited ratifications; and the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by 93 countries.

On the other side of the balance sheet, we continue to see the ongoing reluctance by the only State in the Middle East with considerable nuclear weapon capabilities, Israel, to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to place all its nuclear installations and facilities under full scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Also, we see the continued reluctance by the Nuclear-Weapons States to meet their obligations in compliance with Article VI of the NPT by pursuing negotiation in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. The lack of full agreement to the Protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention is another setback for the international cooperation. In addition, we note the absence of real genuine intentions to convene the Fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Finally, there is the failure so far to take practical steps towards broadening the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to encompass military holdings and procurement through national production, as well as stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

The growing gap between the rich and the poor is fuelling inequality. A continuation of the unjust status quo will inevitably continue to fuel conflicts in several regions. Small arms are the weapons of choice for today's combatants because of their ease of use and availability. The supply of limitless quantities of small arms and light weapons in areas of high tension has fuelled numerous civil wars and caused the death of victims who are mostly civilians. This is why the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects achieved important progress in July 2001. The Conference attracted widespread attention, with the world's media reporting extensively on the cost and carnage caused by those weapons. Civil society groups from across the globe were deeply and creatively involved. After tense and difficult negotiations, Member States forged a consensus among diverse views and interests and adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action, whose full implementation we call for, promptly and as soon as possible.

Jordan has always been committed to the cause of international peace and security. Over the years, we have advocated a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Middle East, a settlement that could lead to just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region. We realized, as did many others within and outside the region, that for durable peace to be achieved, positive steps towards confidence-building between the parties have to be taken. In addition to such steps is freeing the region of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Jordan has adhered to the Chemical Weapons Convention, ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Mines, and signed an IAEA additional protocol for safeguards. By so doing, Jordan has completed its adherence to all international instruments providing for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. It is noteworthy in that context that the General Assembly has, over the past two decades, called upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so — particularly the only State in the region with nuclear-weapon capabilities — to adhere without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards. All the States in the

Middle East, with the exception of Israel, are now parties to the NPT.

Since 1974, the General Assembly has called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and since then, that resolution, by being adopted by consensus, has gained increased momentum.

Furthermore, in paragraph 5 of its resolution on the Middle East, the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference called upon all States in the region to

"take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective".

The 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed the importance of that resolution.

Paragraph 6 of the same resolution called upon all States party to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts to ensure achievement of that goal. Unfortunately, seven years since the historical 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and more than two years since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, no indication of such effort has so far been observed in the region.

As far as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is concerned, we are encouraged by the fact that so far 165 States have signed the Treaty, 93 States have ratified it and 31 have deposited instruments of ratification. We join the other Member States that called on all countries that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty, particularly the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to come into force.

We are also encouraged by the negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. On many occasions, Jordan has reiterated the importance of a fissile material cut-off treaty as a significant step towards achieving both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, we regret that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on its

programme of work for the last six years, as well as its failure to start constructive negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty, among other things.

Jordan has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We regard the Register as an indispensable mechanism for achieving transparency in armaments that leads to confidence-building, especially in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East. However, we believe that the Register will not be effective unless its scope is expanded to include military holdings and procurement through national production, as well as weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons in particular. We therefore regret the fact that the Panel of Governmental Experts failed to deal with that problem.

As I outlined earlier, Jordan has ratified the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Mines. That step has served to reaffirm our commitment to help eliminate that most excessively injurious and inhumane weapon that has indiscriminate effects, especially on children and other innocent civilians. Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, in her capacity as patron of the Landmine Survivors' Network, is leading and contributing to the worldwide campaign to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines.

Finally, let me share with members a quotation by His Late Majesty King Hussein of Jordan: "Real victories are those that protect human life, not those that result from its destruction or emerge from its ashes".

The Chairman: Since we are now getting closer to the end of our meeting this morning, the Committee will listen to the remaining speakers, namely Qatar and the Republic of Korea, tomorrow morning. But before I adjourn the meeting, I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): In view of some statements on the implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguard agreements vis-à-vis the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my delegation feels it necessary to reiterate its position in general. We, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, strongly demand that all efforts be made for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear threats. Those efforts stem from the fiscal reality we face on the Korean peninsula. We stand for the total removal of

all nuclear weapons and the withdrawal of foreign forces from the peninsula.

Regarding NPT safeguards, we need to know the essence of the nuclear issue regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The so-called nuclear issue stemmed from the intention and purpose to destroy our system and stifle our country, against the background of the newly prevailing international political environment of the early 1990s. In essence, it is the product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The issue of implementing the safeguards agreement will automatically be resolved when the hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are resolved and when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework is implemented.

The core element contained in the Agreed Framework, reached on 21 October 1994, is the provision of light-water reactors by the United States in lieu of a freeze on our nuclear activities. So far, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has fulfilled its obligations 100 per cent with regard to the Agreed Framework. However, the United States just started ground concrete tamping and has thus not met the target to complete the light water reactor construction by 2003, as it had promised under the Agreed Framework.

As relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are hostile, not based on trust, the commitments of the two sides under the Agreed Framework should be implemented

on the principle of simultaneous action. We call upon the United States to drop its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and implement the Agreed Framework as it had pledged.

I hope that the First Committee will view all other related issues in this vein.

The Chairman: Distinguished delegates, with this right of reply from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Committee has had the last speaker for this morning's meeting. Before I adjourn the meeting, I would like to remind the Committee that in accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on disarmament and international security agenda items will be closed today, Monday, 30 September, at 6 p.m. I urge those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible, in order to enable us to fully and constructively utilize the conference facilities made available for the Committee.

It should be further noted that, as agreed at the organizational meeting, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions has been set at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 10 October. It is my intention, with your cooperation, to strictly implement this deadline as in previous years. In this connection, I wish to urge you kindly to submit your draft resolutions and decisions as early as possible, especially traditional draft resolutions and decisions, and the draft resolutions that might entail programme budget implications.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.



General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

First Committee

3rd meeting

Tuesday, 1 October 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

The Chairman: This morning, the First Committee will continue its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before we start, may I once again take this opportunity to remind delegations to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election, and we wish you and the members of the Bureau every success in fulfilling your mandate. My delegation will cooperate fully with you in order to ensure the success of our deliberations. We should also like to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his excellent efforts in the area of disarmament and for the comprehensive briefing he gave us yesterday at the opening of the general debate.

Despite the efforts of the international community and the accession of many Member States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the issue of proliferation remains a primary concern of all the countries of the world and at all levels, as such

weapons pose a major threat to international peace and security and a constant and horrific threat to the sustainability of life in general. The acquisition of such unconventional weapons, the proliferation of their technology and the danger that they might fall into irresponsible hands constitute a sword of Damocles hanging over us. In particular, the acquisition of nuclear weapons and their technology has become possible because of the spread of nuclear physicists throughout the world, which is enabling many countries to gain detailed information and access to the secrets of building such weapons. Even worse, the technology for nuclear weapons might fall into the hands of factions that could use them or sell them to any that can pay for them.

Therefore, in order to promote international peace and security, confidence-building between States and Governments, political initiatives that call for a rapprochement among countries, and the fair, equitable and peaceful settlement of disputes, weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated. In this respect, my country welcomes the accession by the Government of Cuba to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and calls on other States to follow suit.

With respect to weapons of mass destruction, let me cite the dangers facing the Middle East region and the inequity in the balance of power that results from Israel's possession of undeclared nuclear weapons. All countries in the region have acceded to the NPT and have assumed their obligations under that Treaty. However, Israel has refused outright to accede to that

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Treaty. It clings to its nuclear arsenal, flouting all international treaties and agreements, as well as appeals by the international community to join the international coalition, to sign the relevant treaties, to place its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and to destroy its stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

It is regrettable that some Israel-friendly States continue not only to tolerate Israel's behaviour but are even cooperating in offering facilities and enabling Israel to develop its nuclear technology and to increase its production of weapons of mass destruction.

We are concerned at the double standard that is being applied by the international community in dealing with nuclear-weapon issues. While international pressure is mounting on a certain country that has been accused of acquiring weapons of mass destruction, we are witnessing complete and flagrant tolerance vis-à-vis Israel. This logic is unacceptable and adversely affects the credibility of the United Nations. Such danger confronts us primarily in the Middle East region. We call on the international community and on those countries that have influence on the State of Israel to bring pressure to bear on that State in order to induce it to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction and to work to secure permanent peace.

High-technology biological, chemical and conventional weapons are no less dangerous in terms of international peace and security. The world has suffered in the past from the consequences of conventional wars, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. The impact of conventional weapons on States that suffered from those wars can be seen in the environment, the people and the flora and fauna.

The State of Qatar was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, given the adverse and devastating impact over the years of those landmines, which continue to claim innocent lives. In this context, we believe that those States that planted landmines during wartime must commit to removing those mines following the end of the hostilities.

In speaking of conventional weapons, we must recall here that small arms and light weapons are no less dangerous than landmines or booby traps, given the threat they pose to security and stability.

We welcome the fact that the question of confidence-building is of high priority in the context of disarmament. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an instrument that reflects international cooperation in promoting transparency and in building confidence among States. Nonetheless, my country believes that the Register remains weak because of lack of greater cooperation.

One of the Register's shortcomings is the fact that it has not been expanded to cover all types of weapons including weapons of mass destruction. The Register's continued effectiveness will require greater transparency. We note also the failure to respond on the part of some Member States. If their views are not taken into account, the effectiveness of the Register cannot be increased and it will fail in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your diplomatic skills and your dedication to disarmament and non-proliferation will ensure a successful outcome to our discussions.

As we begin the deliberations of the First Committee during this fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, we are mindful of the fact that they are being held against the backdrop of the first anniversary of 11 September — a tragedy of such magnitude that it has changed the perception of global security. In particular, these terrorist acts have heightened our vigilance with respect to the threat of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

Since 11 September a common sense of purpose, unity and resolve has galvanized the international community in the fight against terrorism. We must seize this opportunity to address the difficult issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, which have eluded agreement in previous sessions.

My delegation underscores the need to strengthen multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation. As a multilateral approach represents the best way to address arms-control issues, there is an increasing need for multilateralism to become more adaptive to the changing dynamics of international security. Moreover, in order to attain the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, strenuous efforts at

the bilateral, subregional and regional levels should be pursued in parallel with a multilateral approach.

I would like to touch upon issues of priority to my delegation.

Securing nuclear non-proliferation and achieving progress in nuclear disarmament should be a priority for us all. My delegation is convinced that the 13 practical steps stipulated in the Final Document of the 2000 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference should be translated into concrete action as soon as possible. Above all, there is an urgent need to achieve universality of the NPT — the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime — and to strengthen its safeguards system through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, we welcome the decision of the Republic of Cuba to accede to the NPT. We sincerely hope that this development will encourage the other three States to follow suit as soon as possible.

Recent developments within the nuclear landscape have reaffirmed the central role of the IAEA, as a fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, in ensuring compliance with the non-proliferation obligations of the NPT.

In that regard, we urge the States parties that have yet to conclude and bring into force safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible. Furthermore, my delegation fully supports the initiatives of the IAEA — particularly its programmes designed to safeguard nuclear material against non-peaceful uses, to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities and to deter the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radiation sources. Those measures aim to reduce the likelihood of nuclear terrorism and to enhance our capabilities to combat such threats. In recognition of the importance of achieving the universality of the Additional Protocol, my Government is taking the domestic measures necessary for its implementation.

The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to lend the IAEA its full cooperation, without further delay, for the implementation of safeguards obligations under the NPT and the Geneva Agreed Framework of 1994. North Korea's full cooperation with the IAEA is not only a prerequisite for uninterrupted progress in and completion of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization light-

water reactor project, but is also essential for the inter-Korean peace process.

We believe that the processes of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing and should proceed simultaneously. In that regard, we welcome the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, signed by the United States and by the Russian Federation in May 2002. We hope that that agreement between the two largest nuclear Powers will inspire other nuclear-weapon States to further reduce their nuclear arsenals and adopt enhanced transparency and accountability measures. They should do so on the basis of the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability. We also welcome the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, adopted by the Group of Eight last June.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains the most important unfinished business on our agenda. It is not accidental that it was featured at the top of the list of the 13 practical steps of the NPT Final Document. The international community should take every opportunity to demonstrate its clear and strong support for the Treaty as an essential pillar of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. We call upon those States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force to sign and ratify it without further delay. We would also like to underscore that, pending the Treaty's entry into force, it is vital that the moratorium on nuclear testing be maintained. In that regard, we welcome the Joint Ministerial Statement on the CTBT issued in New York last month.

It was disappointing once again to see this year's Conference on Disarmament end in continued stalemate because of the divergence of views with regard to its programme of work. While the collective will to achieve consensus was evident, the Conference was unable to deal with the new security environment. That impasse can be obviated only through significant political will and the spirit of compromise. Given the overwhelming desire expressed by Conference members, the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices should not be held up by disagreements over other issues. The conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) will constitute not only a practical step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but also an effective means of

combating nuclear terrorism by reducing the risk that loose nuclear materials might fall into the wrong hands. Therefore, we believe that an immediate commencement of the negotiations is in the best interests of the international community.

There is a need for disarmament and non-proliferation regimes relating to weapons of mass destruction to become more resilient and adaptive to emerging threats, especially the potential use of chemical and biological weapons by terrorists and by other non-State actors. As part of such efforts, the First Committee should pay close attention to the issues of chemical and biological weapons.

My Government, as an active member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), attaches great importance to ensuring the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the full compliance of States parties with their obligations in accordance with the Convention. Given the danger that chemical materials might fall into the wrong hands, the issue of industry inspection is gaining attention within the framework of the Convention. My delegation hopes that, under its new leadership, the OPCW will be more efficient in carrying out its challenging tasks and that the First Review Conference of the Convention, to be held next year, will provide a valuable opportunity for useful discussion on more effective implementation of the Convention.

With regard to biological weapons, national, bilateral and multilateral efforts are all necessary in order to combat the threat posed by biological weapons. Within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), it is our sincere hope that, in the interests of strengthening the Convention, States parties will be able to devise an effective work programme at the resumed Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in November this year.

Global efforts to counter the growing threat posed by ballistic missile proliferation should be redoubled. In that context, my delegation welcomes the adoption of the draft International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, initiated by the members of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). We look forward to the early launch and universalization of the Code, which holds great significance as the first international norm against the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

My delegation believes that effective and rigorous enforcement of export controls is a key component of the non-proliferation infrastructure. The more non-State actors become engaged in the transfer of materials and technologies and the more diversified such transfers become in their patterns, the greater the necessity for States parties to enforce export controls at the national and global levels. Based on that strong conviction, the Government of the Republic of Korea has elected to hold the plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in Seoul in May 2003 and will assume the chairmanship for the subsequent year. At the recently held General Conference of the MTCR, it was decided that my Government would host the 2004 General Conference. My delegation is also pleased to announce that my Government and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs will co-host the International Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, to be held on Jeju Island in December 2002.

I turn now to the field of conventional arms. Measures to combat and prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons are of the utmost concern. My delegation welcomes the regional initiatives that are currently encouraging the implementation of the Programme of Action, and we look forward to the biennial meeting in 2003 as providing further impetus to that endeavour. My Government strongly supports the promotion of confidence-building measures to facilitate the process of disarmament and arms control. We regard the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an occasion to strengthen its role as the voluntary repository of data on armaments and thereby to ensure wider participation by the international community. On the Korean peninsula, we have begun mine-clearing operations in the Demilitarized Zone this month as a precursor to reconnecting cross-border rail and roads. This constitutes an important step forward for inter-Korean confidence-building. We hope that this development will pave the way for further positive measures within the framework of military confidence-building measures between South and North Korea in the near future.

In concluding, let me say that the past year has brought us to the threshold of new hopes and formidable challenges in the arena of global peace and security. This session of the First Committee has an

important responsibility to address those issues. We look forward to working closely with other delegations in the coming weeks.

Mr. Bruno Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Member States of the Rio Group — Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Guyana representing the States of the Caribbean, and my own country, Costa Rica, on your well-deserved election to chair the work of the First Committee. I can assure you of the support of all the members of the Rio Group so that together we can bring our work to the greatest success possible.

I would also like to thank the other officers of the Committee. By the same token, allow me to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Mr. Dayantha Dhanapala, and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the leadership and professionalism with which they have supported all the initiatives in favour of disarmament. We would also like to thank Ambassador Dhanapala for his statement before this Committee.

One year ago, after the despicable terrorist attack of 11 September, this Committee and the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/24 T on "Multilateral cooperation on disarmament, non-proliferation of arms and global efforts against terrorism". The Rio Group wishes to open this general debate by reaffirming its commitment to multilateralism as the fundamental principle in disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations. It emphasizes the urgent need to renew this commitment, not only to maintain international peace and security but also to contribute to the global fight against terrorism.

The Rio Group is a model of multilateralism. Since its creation 15 years ago, the Rio Group has been a standing machinery for political consultation and agreement, and has promoted both dialogue and the adoption of specific proposals to achieve peace, strengthen democracy and foster the development of the Latin American region.

The members of the Rio Group welcome the creation of the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation at the Second Meeting of South American Presidents, held last July in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with a

view to contributing to the security and development of the region.

The Rio Group reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the international legal instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the opening of a new cycle looking towards the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The member States of the Rio Group are ready to work constructively in the strengthening and revitalization of this crucial treaty. We welcome Cuba's decision to accede to this treaty, and we urge the three States that are still operating nuclear installations without safeguards in the region to join the treaty.

Moreover, we must express our concern at the fact that the Thirteen Measures on Nuclear Disarmament annexed to the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference have not been fully implemented. We regret the lack of substantial progress on this issue.

The Rio Group condemns the development of new nuclear weapons. We endorse the results of the Conference on Measures to Facilitate the Entrance into Effect of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and we invite all States to sign this crucial instrument.

As Members of the first nuclear-free zone, we the member States of the Rio Group welcome and commend Cuba's decision to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This act will bring into force the first denuclearized regime in an inhabited zone.

Furthermore, we welcome the consolidation of Mongolia's status as a nuclear-free zone. We urge the five Central Asian States to finalize their negotiations on a treaty that would establish a nuclear-free zone in their region. In the same vein, the member States of the Rio Group support the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere and its neighbouring areas.

Once more, we fully reaffirm the communiqué issued by the Rio Group Foreign Ministers on the transport of radioactive material and hazardous wastes. That document was distributed in September last year under the symbol A/56/360. We call upon the international community to strengthen the international legal regime applicable to the security of maritime transport of radioactive waste.

We are convinced that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction is the best way to achieve international peace and security. In this context, we trust that the negotiations being held in Geneva to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction with provisions for verification will make some progress. We believe that the Convention on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction is an essential instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation.

Regarding conventional arms, the member States of the Rio Group have agreed to broaden the bilateral, regional and global confidence- and security-building measures, particularly within the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, where participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms constitutes an important undertaking towards international peace and security. In this context, we reiterate the importance of the standardization of the military expenditures accounting systems.

In the San José Declaration, our heads of State and Government endorsed a proposal for an effective and gradual reduction of the defence expenditures in the region. This plan will make it possible to allocate a part of the defence budgets to fighting poverty through the promotion of education, health and social programmes for the benefit of the people while taking into account each country's security needs as well as current levels of expenditure. In this context, they welcomed the progress already made and to be made in the future, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to attain this goal as established in the Santiago Declaration, and they agreed to exchange information on the initiatives and measures adopted by our countries to implement this proposal.

We are convinced that complete elimination of the weapons of mass destruction is the best way to achieve international peace and security. The member States of the Rio Group are fully committed to attaining the goals of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We reaffirm our commitment to make our region a zone free of this kind of weapons. This commitment was expressed in Geneva a few days ago

at the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention.

In the San José Declaration, our heads of State and Government reiterated their deep concern over the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and reaffirmed their political resolve to prevent, combat and eradicate it, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the relevant United Nations Conference and the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials.

In conclusion, the States members of the Rio Group express their gratitude for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Development and Disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean, located in Lima, Peru. That body has supported countless regional disarmament initiatives, stimulated debate on security and contributed to coordinating United Nations efforts to promote peace and security region-wide.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of the full support of the Cuban delegation. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Due to its importance, I would like to begin by reiterating the announcement, made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba in his statement in the general debate of the General Assembly on 14 September, to the effect that our country has decided to become a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a signal of the clear political will of the Cuban Government and its commitment to an effective disarmament process that will ensure world peace. In so doing, we reaffirm our hope that all nuclear weapons will be totally eliminated under strict international verification.

Cuba intends actively to involve itself in the preparatory process of the coming NPT Review Conference and to work with other State parties that share our concerns about the limitations of the Treaty and the lack of fulfilment of obligations by the nuclear-weapon States. In addition, and despite the fact that the only nuclear Power in the Americas pursues a policy of hostility towards Cuba that does not rule out the use of force, Cuba will also ratify the Treaty for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed by our country in 1995. The Government of the Republic of Cuba has already initiated the necessary national domestic procedures to become a State party to both Treaties in the shortest possible time. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the numerous delegations that have welcomed or intend to welcome Cuba's decision, in this debate or at any given moment.

The emergence of a unipolar world has not resulted in greater security for most of us. On the contrary, despite the end of the cold war, military expenditures continue to increase on an accelerated basis, at the expense of the allocation of more resources to development.

How much could be achieved if only a part of the \$849 billion dollars that are allocated annually to military expenditures — almost half of which is spent by only one country — were invested in the assistance of 815 million hungry people, 1.2 billion people living in abject poverty, 854 million illiterate adults, 2.4 billion people without basic sanitation or the 40 million human beings sick with or having contracted the AIDS virus? Would it not be much better to use those huge amounts of money to reduce the difference in income between the richest and the poorest countries, which was 37 times greater in 1960 and now stands at 74 times greater?

Thus, Cuba restates the proposal of agreeing, as an immediate step, that 50 per cent of funds currently earmarked for military spending be channelled to a fund available to the United Nations for sustainable development. That would instantly raise more than \$400 billion.

Some United States Government senior officials have addressed slanderous accusations against Cuba, alleging that our country is engaged in a "limited, developmental, offensive biological warfare research and development effort". Once again, Cuba vigorously rejects such lies. In contrast to the United States, Cuba does not possess and never intends to possess any weapon of mass destruction. It is the United States and not Cuba that opposes the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention by means of a protocol that includes transparent and non-discriminatory international verification measures.

Cuba restates the validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Expert Group, which has been negotiating the aforementioned protocol for more than six years, and calls on the United States to discontinue its insistent attempts to ignore the many years of effort invested by the international community.

Multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament is at a critical juncture. Of urgent concern is the tendency to unilateralism of the Government of the major military Power, reflected in, among many other examples, the negotiations on the protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention; its abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty this year; its progress towards the deployment of a national anti-missile defence system; its opposition to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and its inclusion of key proposals in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Through blackmail and pressure, including the threat to stop paying its financial contributions, the United States had the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons dismissed in April this year. It is unacceptable that any country, no matter how powerful, should dictate at whim who may or may not take key posts in an international organization, solely on the basis of its narrow national interests.

Furthermore, the United States Nuclear Posture Review was revealed early this year, by which the potential uses of nuclear weapons are enhanced, including among potential targets countries that do not possess such weapons, and an attempt is made to legitimize the indefinite possession of these weapons. Additionally, the United States is now seeking to impose on us the so-called pre-emptive war doctrine, a clear violation of the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter, while Iraq is being threatened by unilateral military action if the Security Council does not yield to pressures to endorse this new war.

Nowadays, while it is more threatened than ever, Cuba defends even more vigorously the need to preserve multilateralism in international relations. Preventing unilateralism from being consolidated and eroding the role of the United Nations is a collective responsibility and begins with such elementary actions as ensuring resources and the appropriate number of meetings for specialized bodies on disarmament.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is the smallest in the United Nations and the First Committee meets less than any other Main Committee. Yet, the convening of an even more curtailed session was actually proposed this year, which fortunately did not occur. The United Nations Disarmament Commission, the only universal deliberative specialized body on disarmament, could not meet this year because other events on the United Nations agenda were considered of higher priority. The Conference on Disarmament remains stagnant and has not been able to begin negotiations on the highest priority disarmament issue — nuclear disarmament — due to some countries' inflexible positions.

Cuba considers of major importance the adoption this year by the First Committee of a resolution on the full validity of multilateralism in the field of disarmament. We expect such a resolution to enjoy the strong support of Member States.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee at this very important juncture. I am confident that, with the benefit of your diplomatic experience and skill, our deliberations will be most fruitful. You may be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Committee. I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his excellent statement yesterday.

Let me begin by recalling the horrific terrorist attacks of 11 September, which posed extraordinary challenges to the international security situation. Unprecedented in scale, the attacks illustrated the increasingly international character of terrorist activities. The international community must take concerted action against international terrorism in order to address this growing threat. I would like to take this opportunity to express the solidarity of my country and its people with the United States of America and the entire international community as we pursue this common endeavour.

Since the events of 11 September, the international community has made significant progress in its fight against terrorism. But it must do more, and arms control and disarmament is one area in which greater efforts must be made. The initiative launched by the Group of Eight (G-8) at the Kananaskis Summit

to prevent the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction has great relevance to the fight against terrorism. My country will contribute more than \$200 million to that initiative. We also commend the efforts made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to upgrade worldwide protection against acts of terrorism involving nuclear and other radioactive materials. Japan has pledged to contribute \$500,000 to the special fund set up for the implementation of the IAEA action plan against nuclear terrorism.

In addition to terrorism, unresolved regional conflicts, some threatening the security of the entire world, continue to cause human suffering. There is a fear that weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, may be used in these conflicts. Their resolution therefore remains a high priority for international peace and security.

With regard to the situation in North-East Asia, the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, recently visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he met with Chairman Kim Jong-Il. The two leaders signed the Pyongyang Declaration, in which both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements. They also confirmed the necessity of resolving security problems, including nuclear and missile issues, by promoting dialogue among the countries concerned.

I would also like to refer to the Iraqi issue. Iraq must comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, it must allow immediate and unconditional inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction.

It is the fervent wish of Japan, as the only country to have experienced the devastation caused by nuclear bombs, to see the attainment of a safe, nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that the most effective way to achieve that goal is through practical and concrete steps in nuclear disarmament. Japan highly values the signing of the treaty on strategic offensive reductions between Russia and the United States, and expects that this treaty will serve as an important step towards nuclear disarmament efforts.

At the same time, we are gravely concerned about the obstacles to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This Treaty represents a historic multilateral step towards

nuclear disarmament and strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan has been doing its utmost, through bilateral contacts and multilateral means, to encourage non-signatories and non-ratifiers to accede to the Treaty. Last month, building on the achievements of the Conference held in accordance with article XIV in November 2001, Japan, together with Australia and the Netherlands, took the initiative of issuing a joint ministerial statement on the CTBT. The three countries are inviting other countries to be included in the list of issuers of the statement; the list currently includes 18 Foreign Ministers from all geographic regions. The statement will be forwarded to the Secretary-General to be circulated as an official document of the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all States to join this meaningful statement. In addition, my country is fully cooperating with the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization for the establishment of a verification system. Pending the entry into force of this Treaty, however, it is imperative that the States concerned maintain the moratoria on nuclear-weapon-test explosions.

We are deeply disappointed at the six-year-long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and its failure again this year to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would be a significant step for nuclear non-proliferation and an essential building block for further nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the strengthened control of nuclear materials under a fissile material cut-off treaty will aid in the prevention of nuclear and radiological terrorism. For these reasons, negotiations must be commenced immediately, in accordance with the mandate that was agreed upon in 1995. The series of educational seminars that the Netherlands is currently conducting is benefiting all delegations in Geneva by preparing them for the negotiations once they begin.

The maintenance and strengthening of the regime established by Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is essential to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is particularly important to promote the universality of the NPT and to ensure full compliance with the Treaty by all Member States. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of Cuba to accede to the Treaty, as well as to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With the first session of the Preparatory Committee in April, a good start has been made in the

NPT review process leading up to the 2005 Review Conference. I would like to stress the need for the implementation of the agreements contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

It is important to promote the universality of the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement as an effective means to stem non-compliance. Japan organized a seminar for the Asian-Pacific region in June of last year, and since then has been contributing to seminars held in Latin America, Central Asia and Africa. It will hold a conference for the same purpose in Tokyo this December.

With regard to Central Asia, having assisted the efforts made by regional States and the United Nations, Japan is particularly pleased that the negotiations on the text of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty have been concluded. Japan looks forward to the signing of the treaty in the near future.

Again this year, my delegation will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons." We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention and to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must be continued.

In order to address the threat of biological weapons, it is necessary to create a comprehensive strategy with the Biological Weapons Convention as its most fundamental element. However, since the suspension last year of the Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, States parties have yet to agree on common ground so as to strengthen this multilateral convention. It is critical for the success of the Review Conference in November to agree on a follow-up mechanism addressing a focused agenda of certain key issues. We will continue to support the efforts by Ambassador Tibor Toth, President of the Conference, to bring about a convergence of positions.

The international community must address the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which is increasingly a threat to international as well as regional peace and security. States must make genuine efforts to restrain and reduce missile activities and to prevent their proliferation. Japan supports the universalization process involved in an international code of conduct. This process must establish a new norm that will truly

contribute to preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

The gravity of the problem of small arms and light weapons is all too well illustrated by the fact that these weapons cause more than 90 per cent of all casualties in armed conflicts, equalling approximately 500,000 deaths every year. The Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects last July is a historic landmark representing the collective will of the international community to address such problems. In the months since the Conference, Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of this Programme. Earlier this year it held a meeting in Tokyo as a follow up to the Conference, and next January it will organize a seminar on the problems of small arms in the Pacific region. Another seminar will be held on the Asian region in February, with the cooperation of my Government, the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations.

Assistance to those countries affected by small arms is essential, and the international community must unite its efforts to mobilize the available resources. Japan has been active in this area, too, by extending assistance in cooperation with the United Nations and its regional centres for peace and disarmament. For example, it sent research missions to Bougainville and Sri Lanka, in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. Japan has also decided to support United Nations activities in the field of disarmament education in Cambodia, in addition to providing bilateral assistance for a weapons-for-development programme. Furthermore, we have recently begun a joint research programme with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on arms collection projects in various countries. Japan will spare no effort to help affected countries in this priority area.

Japan attaches particular importance to the activities of the United Nations tracing study Group, which is aimed at studying the feasibility of an international instrument to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms. The objective of the first biennial meeting, to be held next year, will be to make the implementation of the Programme of Action more effective and efficient by exchanges on lessons learned by States and international and regional organizations, as well as by non-governmental organizations. It is hoped that in this way a solution to the problem will be

found more quickly. Japan will make a contribution to support the success of this meeting.

Here I should like to highlight the gender aspect of the small arms issue. One of the extraordinary aspects of contemporary wars and conflicts is the large proportion of non-combatants among the victims. As a matter of fact, the greatest number of conflict-related deaths of women and children are caused by small arms.

This year, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is celebrating the tenth anniversary of its establishment as a result of a joint initiative of the European Community and Japan. Since 1992, the Register has been playing a significant role in promoting transparency in arms, and in order to enhance its universality, Japan has been organizing, with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Nations, a series of regional workshops. Another workshop is being planned in Indonesia next February for the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to take this opportunity to remind delegations that the tenth anniversary symposium will be held here in New York on 15 October, with the cooperation of those four countries and the United Nations. Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki will make a keynote statement at that symposium.

Japan has also been making vigorous efforts to enhance the universality of the Ottawa Convention, particularly in Asia and the Pacific Region. The seminar, organized by the Government of Thailand in May, provided an excellent opportunity to promote the Convention in the region. The next meeting of States parties will be held in Bangkok; it will be the first such meeting to be convened in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan will assist Thailand by serving as a Co-Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies.

In addition, we have been actively participating in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts which was established at the Review Conference of States Parties to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention in December last year. Japan is eager to see a positive outcome of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties in December this year on the issues of anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war.

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be promoted at all levels. We have just received the report of the United Nations expert group on this issue and look forward to its implementation by Member States and relevant organizations.

My country has received as many as 400 participants in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme over the past 20 years. The Programme includes visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It enables junior diplomats, in particular, to gain a deeper understanding of different disarmament issues, and many former fellows are now diplomats active in this field. Japan will continue to support this worthwhile Programme.

My country appreciates the activities of the three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament. Having attended the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Kyoto in August this year, I believe that these activities should be further enhanced. They help us to focus on, and conduct in-depth analyses of, disarmament issues in relation to broader and urgent global problems which are on the agenda of the United Nations.

In the current international security environment — one in which terrorism is a major threat — arms control and disarmament should be promoted at every level, including the bilateral and multilateral levels. The Moscow Treaty between Russia and the United States was a major bilateral achievement. The Group of Eight (G-8) also agreed on an initiative for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All that is lacking now is progress on multilateral disarmament. It is urgently necessary to break the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and to start substantive work towards that goal. During this year's annual session, the Conference on Disarmament witnessed a historic cross-group effort, initiated by five ambassadors, to achieve agreement on a programme of work. The international community is eager to see — even during the closing period — some form of progress brought about through various efforts in Geneva as well as in the capitals of States members of the Conference.

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of addressing the root causes of the various threats to international peace and security, including terrorism and regional conflict. From this viewpoint, it is important, in post-conflict situations, for the

international community to cooperate for the structural prevention of the resurgence of conflict, not only through disarmament and demobilization but also by promoting economic and social development, democratization and reconciliation. That approach will help to ensure a fundamental, long-term and comprehensive solution to security problems in volatile areas. I believe that the international community must take such an approach in order to consolidate peace and stability around the world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It gives me great pleasure to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over the work of the First Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you my warmest congratulations and sincere wishes for success in the difficult task that is before you — a task that I am sure you will fulfil to the satisfaction of all Member States.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the members of the Bureau and to assure them of the full support of my delegation. I would also like to pay a warm tribute to your predecessor, Mr. André Erdős of Hungary, for the outstanding manner in which he directed the work of the Committee during its previous session.

Finally, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his dedication and his invaluable contribution to the cause of disarmament.

The deep-rooted changes that led to the end of the cold war and its ideological antagonisms gave rise to tremendous hope for the advent of a new international order based on a renewed vision of peace and stability in the world — a vision that would bring with it a new type of strategic thinking that would repudiate the military option as a safeguard for national security and rehabilitate the doctrine of collective security taking precedence over competition among the nuclear Powers. Such a vision would mean evaluating the power of a country not by the size of its military arsenal but rather by its capacity to promote peace, security and international cooperation and to share progress and prosperity with others.

Unfortunately, our optimism that global and universal security could be promoted such that it would be better adapted to those new changes has been somewhat undermined by the lassitude that seems recently to have overcome the nuclear disarmament

process — a process that should remain our highest priority. Indeed, the attitude that was in evidence immediately after the end of the ideological confrontation, and which, furthermore, yielded encouraging results in disarmament matters, today shows disturbing signs of becoming increasingly inflexible. Indeed, it may well be that such flexibility has been once and for all sacrificed on the altar of narrow military strategic considerations that can in no way be justified.

The great impetus given to the disarmament process by the conclusion of a series of treaties, both multilateral and bilateral, in particular those relating to the banning of biological and chemical weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, has considerably slackened. That impetus has to be maintained if we wish to make progress towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which has been the goal of the international community since 1946. Nuclear disarmament is, indeed, the only way to save humankind once and for all of the scourge of war and to guarantee peace and security throughout the world.

Previous bilateral and unilateral initiatives, however praiseworthy they are and despite their considerable effect on the process of dismantling nuclear weapons, have been piecemeal and inadequate. They have to be supplemented by more decisive actions in order to give vigour and consistency to the nuclear disarmament structure. Unilateral and bilateral steps to reduce nuclear arsenals can be no substitute for the multilateral approach, which is the only avenue for a comprehensive and thorough treatment of the question of nuclear disarmament.

From that point of view, we urgently need to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament should encourage without delay negotiations on further agreements and multilateral arrangements to neutralize the nuclear threat and to give full effect to article VI of the NPT, which we hold to be binding. The historic commitment made here in New York during the Sixth Review Conference, in which nuclear States quite unambiguously agreed to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals, must be honoured. For that reason, we solemnly reiterate the validity of, and imperative need for, implementation of that agreement. In fact, the elaboration of treaties on fissile material, on nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of an arms race in

outer space remains the only concrete action that can give real meaning and life to the process of nuclear disarmament and can fulfil our legitimate demand that those fearsome weapons be completely eliminated.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is imperative that the Conference on Disarmament take charge of the elaboration of a binding legal instrument guaranteeing the non-use of such arms against States that have renounced the military use of nuclear energy under the NPT. In that regard, my delegation fully supports the new initiative put forward in Geneva by our representative on behalf of his colleagues from Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden. The purpose of that initiative is to free the Conference on Disarmament from the deadlock with which it has been struggling for a number of years, to relaunch its substantive work and to begin in good faith negotiations to prepare such treaties, as the International Court of Justice requested of us in its advisory opinion of July 1996. It also supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to identify ways and means to give impetus and vitality to the disarmament process and to make irreversible progress towards nuclear disarmament.

As well, my delegation must express the importance and interest that it attaches to the principle of irreversibility with regard to nuclear disarmament and measures to control and to reduce nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, achieving that noble objective fundamentally depends on the determination of nuclear States to promote the advent of an international order that is no longer founded on weapons-based supremacy, but in which security — to be indivisible, universal and undiminished — must become the most widely shared value of all humankind. The nuclear States must also resolutely promote a new approach to disarmament which will result in renunciation of the nuclear doctrine, which has become obsolete and outdated.

My delegation welcomes Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Through that decision, Cuba has confirmed its commitment to nuclear disarmament and has given real impetus to the universality of the NPT.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones effectively contributes to strengthening the non-

proliferation regime, to efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat and to the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore welcome the creation of such zones by the four Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. We hail the efforts made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The 27 September 2002 acceptance by a group of experts from Central Asian States of the text of a draft treaty establishing a denuclearized zone in that region was an important step forward and therefore deserves our full support. We express the fervent wish that similar concrete actions will be undertaken in areas of tension such as the Middle East and South Asia.

The lack of progress on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East deeply worries us. It is due to the refusal of Israel, the only country in the region not to have acceded to the NPT, to eliminate the nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in its possession and to submit its nuclear installations to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That lack of progress highlights — if this were needed — the importance of making the NPT universal and the extent of the selectivity and discrimination to which that principle is subjected. It should also prompt us to demand that Israel accede to the treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/229) transmitting the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. That initiative, which we absolutely must encourage, constitutes a very important step enabling us to deal, within the framework of the United Nations system, with the very delicate issue of missiles, which, despite their peaceful applications, are first and foremost fearsome delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction.

Our demand for general and complete disarmament is a product of our firm conviction that there is no alternative to disarmament, which is the only way to free humankind once and for all of the threat of annihilation, to ensure world peace and security and to free up for economic and social development the resources currently spent on arms. We have always believed that the questions of disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international security are inextricably linked to economic and social development. In that

regard, Algeria gives its full support to the proposal of the Secretary-General to create a group of governmental experts to study the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context, as well as the future role of the United Nations in that domain.

As well, Algeria, which has a strong and vital commitment to a collective security able to create a new era of peace, peacefulness and well-being, has chosen to allocate only a very modest percentage of its revenues to national defence and is committed to promoting research and development for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to participating in the various disarmament efforts.

Our greatest hope is to see the end of the cold war and the qualitative evolution of international relations — which are at the origin of the irreversible globalization movement, with its attendant promises, challenges and threats — give shape to the elements of a new international order that gives primacy to dialogue and cooperation, and which heralds a new age based on a renewed strategic approach of peace and stability.

Today, economic and social development should be the true foundation of peace and coexistence among peoples, at a time of global threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, pandemics and organized crime, which humankind must face collectively, because those phenomena compromise stability and impede all development efforts.

To achieve that, we must go beyond partial, selective and ad hoc responses to be able to ensure that we deal comprehensively with these common concerns and to make shared well-being and prosperity the international community's most important project. That is Algeria's aspiration, and those are the essential principles that underpin the policy of my country, which has constantly worked sincerely to promote cooperation and dialogue and to strengthen security within the traditional framework of belonging and solidarity.

Encouraged by the political will to build a cooperative space to strengthen the historic links among the peoples of the Maghreb, Algeria will work tirelessly with the other countries of the Maghreb to establish a stable, single, homogenous and prosperous grouping among the five countries that make up the Arab Maghreb Union.

Algeria has also energetically involved itself in the settlement of conflicts in Africa and has worked ceaselessly to promote real solidarity among the countries of the new African Union, which has replaced the Organization of African Unity. In that context, our country actively participated in launching the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which is intended as a strong, common approach to ensuring that the Africans themselves take charge of the development of the African continent.

Furthermore, making the Mediterranean a lake of peace and cooperation has always been a basic objective of Algeria's international policies. Indeed, our desire to make the Mediterranean basin a haven of peace, security and cooperation is evident in our support for the Barcelona Declaration, a manifestation of the new perception of the Euro-Mediterranean area, and for other mechanisms for cooperation that have clearly shown that there is recognition of the special historic nature of relations among the countries on both shores. The commitment expressed by my country to the process of building a Euro-Mediterranean space is based on its profound conviction that only common and concerted action can consolidate stability and security in that region and, as part of a comprehensive approach, to lay the basis of solidarity and cooperation based on common interests and a mutually advantageous partnership.

The signing in Madrid, on 22 April 2002, between Algeria and the European Union, of the historic Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, which establishes a new framework for cooperation between the two parties is the achievement of our shared determination to deepen and widen cooperative relations in the Euro-Mediterranean space.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that in our increasingly interdependent world, never have the peoples of the world been so close to each other. However, much remains to be done to turn our planet into the global village where we aspire to live together. We must work resolutely to reduce inequalities between the rich and the poor in order to better share prosperity and well-being. In other words, we must establish a new international order that is more humane and non-discriminatory in its effects and benefits, and that banishes once and for all the spectre of nuclear threat.

Hence, we are convinced that disarmament is the only sound option for the future of mankind, provided that there is a spirit of solidarity and cooperation among peoples and that it is recognized that the security and comfort of some should not come at the price of the underdevelopment and intimidation of others.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skill, you will surely guide this session to success. You and the other members of the Bureau can rest assured of the full cooperation and support of the Chinese delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Erdős of Hungary for his excellent work as Chairman at the past session.

Not long ago, we commemorated the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. While sharing the grief of the bereaved, we should draw lessons from that tragedy, soberly examining, from a wider perspective, the problems and the challenges to international security and should seek effective ways to achieve lasting peace and common security in the world.

In recent years, with economic globalization rapidly unfolding, countries are sharing many more common interests and ever closer security links. There is greater awareness among countries of the need for dialogue and cooperation. Relations among major countries have improved steadily. Peace and development remain the main theme of the times.

However, we must not overlook problems in the field of international security. Non-traditional security threats such as terrorism are posing a grave challenge to international security. The tragic incident of 11 September 2001 was a stark manifestation of these developments. Although there has been significant headway in the international efforts against terrorism, that threat is far from being eradicated. In both the traditional and non-traditional security dimensions, instability and unpredictability in the overall international security situation are increasing.

In that new situation, ensuring that history is not repeated and creating a peaceful and prosperous new century depends on our ability to seize the historic opportunity and to cope with the new challenges. It is

imperative to foster a new security concept characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, and to address diverse security problems, old and new, with new thinking and approaches.

First, we should strive for the democratization of international relations. Exclusion and confrontation should give way to inclusion and dialogue, so as to improve international relations overall and to achieve a new situation where all countries coexist in a win-win relationship. Secondly, we should promote multilateralism and resolve the problems facing the international community through dialogue and cooperation. Thirdly, we should intensify diplomatic efforts to settle regional hot spots so that lasting peace and stability can be realized in all regions. Fourthly, we should take a comprehensive approach and address both the symptoms and the root causes of non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and transnational organized crime. While making joint efforts to combat terrorism, we also need to have a long-term perspective and try to eradicate underlying social and economic sources of terrorism.

To prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and to eliminate those weapons eventually is crucial for maintaining and enhancing international peace and security. The increasing threat of terrorism today has brought more urgency to international non-proliferation efforts and new challenges to the international non-proliferation regime.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has complex causes and is directly related to the regional and global security environment. The fundamental solution of this problem requires an improvement in overall international relations and lies in political, legal and diplomatic means. The use or threat of force does not help, and will be counterproductive. The full participation of and close cooperation among all States are prerequisites for the success of international non-proliferation efforts and a guarantee of impartiality and sustainability in those efforts. In that regard, we should give full scope to the role of the United Nations and other international organizations.

China supports the efforts of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

in preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the valuable report submitted by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects (A/57/229). China is in favour of making necessary amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and hopes that all parties will bridge their differences in a constructive manner so as to enable the early conclusion of the amending process. In March 2002 China completed the legal procedures for the entry into force of the additional protocol to the Safeguards Agreement between China and IAEA, the first among the five nuclear weapons States to do so. We encourage those States that have not yet done so to take the same step at an early date, thus contributing to the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards regime.

China has always been firm in its policy of not supporting, encouraging or assisting other countries to develop weapons of mass destruction. As a country with certain scientific, technological and industrial capabilities, China is fully aware of its international non-proliferation responsibilities. Over the decades, China has adopted strict measures on the domestic management and export control of sensitive items and technologies, making concrete contributions to the international non-proliferation process. For years, China has constantly improved its export control mechanism and has promulgated a series of laws and regulations on the control of exports of sensitive items on the basis of its own practice and drawing upon the experience of other countries. In view of the new situation after its entry into the World Trade Organization and the September 11 terrorist attacks, China has intensified its efforts to enhance its export control by legal means. Recently, the Chinese Government promulgated the regulations on export control of missiles and the missile-related items and technologies, and the missiles and the missile-related items and technologies export control list.

China has thus put its export control of missiles and related items and technologies, as well as missile-related dual-use items and technologies, into a legal framework. Moreover, to further improve export controls of chemical and biological dual-use items, the Chinese Government will soon promulgate the administrative rules on export control of chemical items and related equipment and technologies, and the

regulations on export control of biological dual-use items and related equipment and technologies.

With the promulgation of the above-mentioned regulations China will establish a comprehensive system of export control over sensitive items covering the nuclear, biological, chemical and missile fields. We will continue to enhance law enforcement to ensure full implementation of existing laws and regulations and to improve our non-proliferation mechanism in light of the changing situation. We would also like to further broaden and deepen exchanges and cooperation with other countries in the non-proliferation field so as to make greater contributions to the international non-proliferation process.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually complementary. Without effective non-proliferation, disarmament could hardly be achieved. Without progress in disarmament, non-proliferation could hardly be effective and sustainable. Therefore, preserving the authority and universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is critical for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this connection China welcomes the decision of Cuba to prepare for accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. China supports the full implementation of the thirteen nuclear disarmament steps as contained in the Final Document of 2000 NPT Review Conference on the premise of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all countries. China always supports and is ready to contribute to the NPT review process.

China welcomes the new treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on the reduction of strategic offensive forces. China hopes that the United States and Russia, as countries with the largest arsenals and very special and primary responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, will continue to drastically reduce and destroy their nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible way.

The comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. China supports its early entry into force. It is critical for all the nuclear weapon States to maintain a nuclear testing moratorium before the Treaty enters into force. China has actively participated in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban

Treaty Organization and has carried out domestic preparations for the implementation of the Treaty. China is ready to work with the international community to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty.

The prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is of significance in the nuclear disarmament process. China supports the early negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will reach a comprehensive and balanced programme of work as soon as possible so as to commence the negotiation of this treaty. China has shown considerable flexibility to that end. We expect other countries to respond positively so that the Conference on Disarmament can carry out substantive work at an early date.

After more than a decade since the end of the cold war, it has become a common aspiration of the international community to shake off the cold war mentality. To achieve this objective, we should first and foremost establish a new concept of cooperative security and seek common security for all countries. In the field of strategic security, the reliance on nuclear weapons should be diminished. It runs counter to the trend of the times to develop missile defence systems designed to strengthen unilateral deterrence, lower the threshold for nuclear weapons used and increase targets for nuclear attacks. This is not only detrimental to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts but is also harmful to international peace, security and stability.

As the Chinese saying goes, prevention is better than cure. One of the major purposes of arms control is to prevent new arms races in new fields. Today, this preventive function is most salient in outer space.

With the drastic development of space science and technology, more and more countries are benefiting from the peaceful use of outer space, and our daily life is increasingly linked to outer space. Peaceful uses of outer space offer a bright prospect for the progress of human civilization. However, the shadow of the weaponization of outer space is looming large. We must set to work urgently to ensure peaceful uses of outer space and prevent it from becoming a new battlefield.

While looking back with regret at the historical mistakes of the cold war in the competition for nuclear

advantage, we should be wise enough to avoid repeating the same mistakes and to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. This is an issue where world peace and the long-term interest of all countries are at stake. It is encouraging to note that this issue is drawing increasing attention from the international community, as demonstrated by the General Assembly resolutions adopted for many consecutive years and non-governmental organization seminars devoted to this issue.

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and start substantive work with a view to negotiating and concluding an international legal instrument on preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space at an early date. For this purpose, China, together with Russia and some other countries, submitted to the Conference a working paper entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (CD/1679) in June this year. This working paper is also circulated as an official document of the current session of the General Assembly (A/57/418). We would like to register our gratitude to the countries concerned for their useful comments and suggestions, and we will continue to conduct serious and earnest discussions on this issue with all parties, further drawing on their views and suggestions to improve and enrich the above-mentioned document.

China always strictly and faithfully fulfils its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and actively supports and participates in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We would like to congratulate Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter on becoming Director-General of the OPCW. We believe that under the leadership of Ambassador Pfirter the OPCW will pass this transitional period smoothly, get back on track and make new progress in the implementation of the Convention. China is ready to work with other member States for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention and the smooth operation of the OPCW.

With the joint efforts of China and Japan, progress was made last year in the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the Chinese territory.

We hope that the substantive destruction process will start as soon as possible so that the grave threat posed by these weapons to the local environment and to the lives and property of the local people can be eliminated within the time-frame set forth in the Convention.

China has supported, and actively participated in, the negotiation of the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We deeply regret that the protocol failed to come to fruition as expected. In the current situation, it is particularly important to strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. Therefore, China welcomes and is willing to discuss within the multilateral framework any suggestions and measures aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention. With the resumed session of the Fifth BWC Review Conference approaching, China wishes to work with other parties in a constructive manner to seek consensus on specific mechanisms and measures for strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention, so that the conference can achieve concrete results.

China has consistently supported international efforts to address the illicit trade in small arms. The Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the conclusion of the Firearms Protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime represent major steps by the international community in this connection. It is of great importance fully to implement the Programme of Action and to facilitate the early entry into force of the Firearms Protocol. We are pleased that the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms is currently examining the issue of the identification and tracing of illegal small arms. We hope that the Group's efforts will produce positive results. China has always attached great importance to the control of the production of, and trade in, small arms. We are now faithfully implementing the relevant measures contained in the Programme of Action and looking into the issue of signing the Firearms Protocol.

China supports the international efforts under way to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We welcome the successful conclusion of the Second CCW Review Conference at the end of last year. We also welcome the decisions adopted at the Conference to amend Article 1 of the Convention by expanding the scope of application of the CCW and to establish a Group of Governmental Experts to further explore issues such as explosive

remnants of war. After two sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts this year, the parties are converging with respect to some aspects of the issue of explosive remnants of war. China wishes to join with other States parties to move this process forward.

In recent years, China has been actively engaged in international demining assistance and has achieved good results. In 2002, China has earmarked about \$3 million for international demining cooperation, which is mainly used for mine clearance assistance to Eritrea and Lebanon. Besides providing the two countries with demining equipment, we have also sent an expert group to Eritrea to train local demining operators. China will continue with international demining assistance within its capacity. We are also willing to cooperate with other States and international organizations to contribute to the strengthening of international demining efforts.

Conducting various forms of exchanges and cooperation helps enhance mutual trust, eliminate suspicions, broaden common ground and advance the processes of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, we deeply appreciate the fruitful work done by the United Nations in recent years. China attaches importance, and actively devotes itself, to dialogue and cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament.

In recent years, we have been conducting fruitful consultations with many countries. Last April, China and the United Nations co-sponsored an international conference on "A Disarmament Agenda for the 21st Century". The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, senior Government officials from more than 20 countries and representatives of non-governmental organizations attended the conference. They conducted in-depth discussions and put forward useful suggestions on such important issues as nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, missile non-proliferation and the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field. A booklet containing a summary of the conference and the statements made will shortly be published by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

After decades of unremitting efforts, the international community has established a relatively complete international arms control and disarmament legal system, which has become an important and stabilizing factor in the global security architecture. In the context of the current situation, this system has an

even more important role to play. Therefore, to preserve this legal system and further to promote the course of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation serves the common interests of all States and is also their shared responsibility. China will join other countries in their efforts towards this objective.

Mr. Zaqueu (Mozambique): At the outset, Sir, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that under your skilful guidance and given your outstanding experience, our deliberations will be crowned with success. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

The delegation of the Republic of Mozambique also wishes to assure you of its full support and cooperation as you discharge your important responsibilities. Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor for the excellent manner in which he discharged his duties as Chairman of this Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Disarmament, arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain high-priority issues on the United Nations agenda. The 11 September events demonstrated to all of us the dangers of international terrorism. The likelihood of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or their components falling into the hands of terrorists multiplies the destructive potential of international terrorism. Therefore, the international community must unite to strengthen and reinforce the non-proliferation regime.

Unfortunately, international efforts towards meaningful cooperation on nuclear disarmament have been rather unimpressive. The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to move forward, as negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on fissile materials remain deadlocked. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force, and the implementation of the results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has yet to become a reality. As a result of this gloomy picture, the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continues unchecked.

This situation needs to be reversed. The goal of nuclear disarmament must be pursued vigorously

through the universalization and operationalization of the existing legal framework, based on the NPT and the CTBT.

Mozambique welcomes the announcement by Cuba that it will accede to the NPT and ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We welcome also the signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in May 2002, aimed at reducing deployed strategic nuclear weapons. These positive developments need to be highlighted and further reinforced.

Non-proliferation is a must. We believe that the NPT and the CTBT remain the cornerstone of an effective non-proliferation regime. However, our ultimate goal should be the universalization of those critical legal instruments, with the goal of achieving complete nuclear disarmament.

We are still confronted with the issue of the prevailing threat of anti-personnel landmines, which continue to disrupt the very existence of nations and peoples. During the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Geneva from 16 to 20 September, Governments, civil society and the private sector reaffirmed their commitment to the total eradication of anti-personnel landmines.

We must start now to prepare for the Convention's First Review Conference, which is due to take place in 2004. It is our hope that the Conference will result in the adoption of meaningful recommendations to address, in a comprehensive manner, the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

We are happy to note that more than 120 States have acceded to the Convention. We urge all States that are not yet parties to it to adhere to the Convention.

Mozambique is committed to playing an important role in combating landmines. I would like to reaffirm once again Mozambique's commitment to conclude, by 2003, the destruction of all stockpiled mines, in accordance with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

The illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons is the main cause of violence and economic and social instability, particularly in

developing countries. In that regard, we stress the importance of full and prompt implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Through its realistic, integrated and action-oriented approach, the Programme of Action is undoubtedly the best option at this point for concrete effort towards curbing the destabilizing and easy availability of small arms and light weapons, particularly in African, Asian and Latin American countries.

We need to take concrete actions at the regional, subregional and national levels to bring about the noble goals of halting the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the world. During the 2003 mid-term review conference we will have the first opportunity to take stock of the progress and failures registered in the implementation of the Programme of Action, with a view to devising the appropriate strategies to continue to deal with this global problem. We encourage all Member States and other stakeholders to participate actively in the event and to work for the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

One of humankind's crucial goals continues to be the need for disarmament and the need for peace and international security around the world. Our success in achieving those goals will greatly depend on the manner in which we accommodate our individual and collective interests. Let us work together to ensure the attainment of those objectives and to enable the United Nations to fulfil its obligations. Mozambique, as in the past, is prepared and committed to lend its modest contribution to those noble goals.

As the Committee may recall, during the Millennium Summit, our leaders committed themselves to spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war and to seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. That commitment must be translated into deeds without delay. We must free the world from all threats of war and violence. We must gear all our efforts towards ensuring the peace, stability and security that human kind so richly deserves. This is within our reach. We must act now in a decisive manner.

Mr. Yap (Singapore): Please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is

confident that, under your able leadership, we will be able to discharge our duties efficiently and effectively. We also extend our appreciation to the previous Chairman, Ambassador André Erdős of Hungary, for his work during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The world has moved from one era to another, with differing security settings. Dynamism and constant change clearly describe the international security environment. Developments in disarmament, however, appear not to have kept pace with the security transformations. Looking back at the work of the First Committee since it was formed, it is reasonable to ask whether the Committee has been like an airplane on auto-pilot in approaching disarmament issues. Did we tend to ignore the repeated warnings from aircraft instruments and air traffic controllers of the dangers ahead, and steered the airplane not quite in the right direction? Now that the global security environment has made another major shift, after 11 September, it is opportune to ask ourselves whether the First Committee should conduct a strategic review of its work and re-examine the course that our aircraft should take.

The United Nations is a key player in disarmament issues, and has been since the inception of our Organization. Disarmament is one of the United Nations most important responsibilities. Under the Charter, the General Assembly is to consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments. In fact, the General Assembly's very first resolution, adopted on 24 January 1946, identified as a goal the elimination of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction. The General Assembly has had the topic of general and complete disarmament on its agenda since 1959. In 1978, following the Assembly's first special session on disarmament, the First Committee was refocused to emphasize disarmament and related security issues.

The world and the international security environment have changed in many ways since the First Committee assumed the mantle as a champion of disarmament, almost a quarter of a century ago. Yet, in contrast, the First Committee seemed to be somewhat behind the curve on the disarmament issues of the day. We appeared to be somewhat unresponsive to the real situation on the ground.

During the cold war, terrified at the prospect of mutually assured destruction, the main concern of the First Committee was with weapons of mass destruction. The international community developed an obsession with nuclear disarmament, and understandably so. However, that was done at the expense of addressing the threat and harm posed by other weapons. What is ironic is that the millions of conflict-related fatalities between the Second World War and the end of the cold war had little to do with nuclear weapons. Most of those who died were the victims of conventional weapons in wars of national liberation and in the proxy wars of the cold war era. Should not the First Committee have more vigorously addressed the massive flow of conventional arms that fuelled those wars?

Killings by small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons continued after the cold war in civil and ethnic conflicts and resource wars. But it was only after an overwhelming groundswell of public sentiment, led by non-governmental organizations, that the United Nations took firm steps on several conventional disarmament issues, such as curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and containing the humanitarian impact of landmines. Why, then, did the First Committee not take the lead on those issues? As a key player in disarmament, it is the duty of the Committee to take the front seat of the aircraft and to steer it in the right direction.

The date of 11 September marked the start of yet another era in the international security environment, one that brings with it new challenges for the First Committee. Determining the direction that disarmament should take in that new era is one of the key challenges that the Committee must face. Our delegation does not pretend to know the answers, nor are the answers in plain view. To ensure that this disarmament instrument effectively addresses the security threats posed in the post-11-September period, we urge the Committee to conduct a strategic review of its work, as it should from time to time when there are significant changes to the security landscape.

Obviously, we cannot continue to discuss disarmament after 11 September without taking into account its association with the menace of terrorism. We now live in a new world, where all of us are vulnerable to asymmetric terrorist attack on a scale not previously thought possible. Even the most powerful

country in the world is not immune. We have seen how everyday items can be creatively morphed into weapons for terror and destruction. Small arms, light weapons and other conventional weapons, as well as weapons of mass destruction, can all fall into the hands of terrorists.

The illicit and uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, is already contributing to terrorism. With the diversion of illicit small arms and light weapons to terrorist networks, acts of terrorism have increased in number and magnitude around the world. Terrorist groups have used rifles and machineguns acquired from illicit sources to carry out acts of terror against the innocent. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects came up with a comprehensive Programme of Action. Many of the measures are also targeted at terrorist organizations, in a way, but more can be done to specifically stem the traffic of small arms and light weapons to terrorists. The First Committee must take up this responsibility, in parallel with the United Nations focus on combating terrorism.

The looming terrorist threat also means that the First Committee should look at disarmament by nation States in the proper context. Certainly, the United Nations must address the economic and social conditions that encourage terrorism. At the same time, however, the terrorism threat makes it imperative for all countries to maintain the capacity to defend themselves. States should neither give the upper hand nor provide breeding grounds to terrorists who have no qualms about attacking society in the most vicious ways. Vegetius said: "Let him who desires peace prepare for war." It is the duty of nation States to equip themselves adequately to protect their citizens against acts of terror. Take, for example, Afghanistan. Without a credible and well-armed security force, it can neither behead the multi-headed Al Qaeda hydra that has been breeding in its midst nor prevent the creature's regeneration.

Let me turn to weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that weapons of mass destruction do not make the world a safer place. Their potential for destruction is too great. Nuclear weapons have been described, and rightly so, as a sword of Damocles hanging over mankind. With the mere push of a button, the human race could be destroyed. Similarly alarming are

chemical and biological weapons — terrifying weapons capable of wreaking instant and devastating damage.

Can we thus imagine the horrors should weapons of mass destruction be used by terrorists? Indeed, the threat of weapons of mass destruction terrorism is real and the danger posed by terrorist acts using weapons of mass destruction is ominous. The key to combating terrorism using weapons of mass destruction is to ensure that no terrorist can get his hands on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. This means, for example, greater focus on curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring the proper destruction of excess weapons of mass destruction, even as nuclear disarmament is pursued. The growing potential of weapons of mass destruction terrorism certainly deserves a strategic review by this Committee of disarmament measures targeting these weapons.

Let me conclude by saying that we are not asking this Committee to reinvent the wheel. It is evident that many of the First Committee's initiatives are relevant to this new era, in which terrorism is of key concern. In fact, the measures against weapons of mass destruction proliferation and illicit small arms and light weapons are more relevant now than ever. It would be prudent, however, for the First Committee not merely to look into what more needs to be done to curb the flow of arms and weapons to terrorist groups, but to engage in a strategic rethinking of its work in the post-11-September era. Perhaps the First Committee could hold interactive discussions or roundtables on disarmament and terrorism during its next session. It is in our collective interests to take our aeroplane off autopilot and to steer it responsively to the signals that we receive in this new era.

The Chairman: I call on the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): The Holy See congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, and my delegation assures you of its cooperation in your leadership of this important Committee. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his important address to this Committee yesterday and for his outstanding contribution to peace and disarmament around the world.

The General Assembly has considered the theme of general and complete disarmament annually since 1959. The threats to international peace and security

faced by the world today are in some important respects different from those of 40 years ago. When we met last year, the horror of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., was fresh in our minds and our resolve to stamp out terrorism strong. While Governments continue to be deeply concerned about terrorism, our role in this Committee is to ensure that the processes of disarmament continues.

The order imposed by the circumstances of the cold war no longer exists and our thinking on disarmament must reflect the new realities of today. For instance, by signing, on 24 May 2002, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, States that were once adversaries agreed to reduce the number of strategic nuclear warheads from 2,200 to 1,700 by the year 2012. While the reductions could have gone further, and even though the Treaty would have been more reassuring if it had provided for irreversible disarmament, transparency and effective verification, the agreement should be welcomed as a new sign of cooperation. The world awaits and, in fact, seriously needs more of the same.

Practical disarmament measures to consolidate peace, regional disarmament agreements and, especially, the measures adopted to curb the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons can be re-energized. These steps, along with the strengthening of the relationship between disarmament and development, can have tremendous effects by improving conditions for human security throughout the world.

The threats posed by biological and chemical weapons have received much attention, partly because rather small amounts of material can have pervasive and devastating effects. All of us have seen the fear and hysteria that trace, but deadly, amounts of anthrax can produce. Because these threats respect no borders, multilateral efforts towards their elimination are absolutely necessary. The world's security now depends on how well States can adapt to these new circumstances. It is a duty of the first order.

During these next few months, the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will reconvene to complete work on negotiating a legally binding verification protocol. The first session of that review can hardly be termed a success.

A re-energization of this process is clearly called for and that is why the Holy See decided to accede to the BWC on 4 January 2002. As stated in the Holy See declaration attached to its instrument of accession to the BWC,

"the tragic events of 11 September 2001 have led to a clearer and more widespread awareness of the need to build a culture of multilateral dialogue and a climate of trust between all the members of the human family. At this particular point in history, instruments of cooperation and prevention constitute one of the most effective safeguards in the face of heinous acts, such as the use of biological weapons capable of indiscriminately striking at innocent civilian populations".

When the BWC, prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of bio-weapons, was opened for signature in 1972, it was the first-ever arms control Convention to completely ban a whole class of weapons. However, it lacked mechanisms for monitoring or verifying compliance. However, it lacked mechanisms for monitoring or verifying compliance. In 1995, work began on drafting concrete measures to ensure that countries comply with the Convention. The setback that occurred at the Fifth Review Conference last year must be overcome because the future biological weapons prohibition regime must be strengthened.

The 145 States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention should agree on a comprehensive list of measures, perhaps to be implemented in stages, that would ensure a strengthening of the Convention through increased transparency and an increase in potential detection and deterrence of prohibited activities. Such an approach would build confidence in the Convention.

In the past year, two important conferences — on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — were held in the nuclear weapons field. Here again, troubling signs of discord were evident. As stated in the Holy See declaration attached to the instrument of accession to the CTBT dated 18 July 2001,

"The Holy See is convinced that in the sphere of nuclear weapons, the banning of tests and of the further development of these weapons,

disarmament and non-proliferation are closely linked and must be achieved as quickly as possible under effective international controls".

A major step forward was taken when the CTBT was opened for signature in 1996. When the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT was held in 2001, 161 States had signed and 87 had ratified the Treaty. But now the momentum appears to have stalled. While all nations and peoples must be grateful that a moratorium on testing is still holding, the resistance to achieving the requisite number of ratifications threatens a collapse of the architecture of the non-proliferation regime that has painstakingly been built over many years.

The second conference, the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, also revealed that nuclear disarmament efforts had stalled. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States pledged an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. A programme of 13 practical steps was adopted for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament. But the hopes raised in 2000 were dashed in 2002 when it became clear that the nuclear-weapon States were not adhering to the 13 steps.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, now abandoned, and the CTBT were both integral to the 13 steps. So can that which was agreed on in 2000 be cast aside just two years later? It must not be forgotten that genuine multilateral efforts are required to achieve nuclear disarmament. These, by their very nature, possess the potential to guarantee universal and permanent norms that bind all States. In this respect, the NPT remains the centrepiece of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the value of the NPT depends on all parties honouring their obligations. The NPT plays a critical role in efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, especially to terrorists and States that support them.

The concern of the Holy See increases as we see the non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its cornerstone, in disarray. The old policies of nuclear deterrence, which prevailed during the time of the cold war, must now yield to concrete disarmament measures, based on dialogue and multilateral negotiation, which are essential values in the disarmament process. Through the instruments of

international law, they facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes, help ensure better mutual understanding and foster a climate of trust, cooperation and respect among all States. In that way they promote the effective affirmation of the culture of life and peace, which is based upon the values of responsibility, solidarity and dialogue.

The Holy See has stated in this Committee many times, and it repeats now, that there can be no moral acceptance of military doctrines that embody the permanence of nuclear weapons. They are incompatible with the peace we seek for the twenty-first century; they cannot be justified. These weapons are instruments of death and destruction.

Cooperation among Governments, including the military and humanitarian organizations and other representatives of civil society, in implementing the Landmines Convention has been exemplary in building trust and goodwill among all concerned groups. The physical or ideological distance between concerned groups or similar difficulties facing disarmament activities need not be an insurmountable obstacle. In this era of interdependence, it is no longer tolerable to condemn, through inaction, entire populations to live in fear and precariousness.

This Committee has done valuable work over many years in raising the norms and standards for disarmament in all its aspects. Though the cycles of history bring with them both advances and retreats, we must keep our minds focused on our goal of reducing the causes of war. Pope John Paul II, in his World Day of Peace message for 2002, entitled "No Peace without Justice, No Justice without Forgiveness", expressed a great hope, based on the conviction that evil, the *mysterium iniquitatis*, does not have the final word in human affairs.

The techniques of mediation, negotiation and verification are still being advanced today. They provide a basis of hope for humanity. These are the steps we must support in the continuing quest to eliminate the weapons of war.

The Chairman: I congratulate Archbishop Renato Raffaele Martino on his appointment to the presidency of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican. I would like, on my own account and on behalf of every one here, to congratulate him. I think it is very good to have a friend at the Vatican.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.



General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

First Committee

4th meeting

Wednesday, 2 October 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The Chairman: Before we commence our work, I would like to inform Committee members that they have before them informal copies of a note from the Secretary of the Fifth Committee addressed to the Secretary of the First Committee, together with a copy of paragraph 298 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its forty-second session (A/57/16), relating to the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-ninth session on the in-depth evaluation of the disarmament programme (document E/AC.51/2002/6). The latter document is available at the documents distribution booth for delegates.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): I join the other delegations that have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of this very important Committee. I also wish to express my appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdős of Hungary, for chairing the Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In addition, I welcome the other members of the Bureau, to whom I extend my delegation's full cooperation. A special welcome goes to the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste, which

join us as the 190th and 191st Member States of the United Nations.

It has been one year since we last met under the shadow of the tragic events of 11 September. That horror exposed our common vulnerability to the new threats to international peace and security. At this session, therefore, the Committee is expected to promote and to strengthen multilateralism as a core principle in our common efforts to prevent those threats from jeopardizing international peace and security. Multilateralism will enable the international community to create conditions of peace and security, which are important prerequisites for the socio-economic development that most of the countries represented here badly need.

The First Committee is a forum in the United Nations that can contribute to the creation of the needed positive international atmosphere through the manner in which it approaches the challenges facing humanity today. It is the view of my delegation that strengthened multilateralism will enhance the role of the United Nations in global affairs. That point was emphasized by the heads of State or Government in the Millennium Declaration two years ago. The countries we represent look to a results-based disarmament programme that will give hope to the future of our children, to whom we owe a stable and prosperous world.

The Committee's goal at this session should be to use multilateralism to strengthen global norms in order to collectively eliminate threats to peace and stability.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



Together, we can eliminate the deadliest weapons of mass destruction that terrorists could use. The promotion of controls on the development, production and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction can bring hope to the world. Furthermore, disarmament efforts can advance conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The past year has witnessed a global preoccupation with the fight against international terrorism. My country has been cooperating, and stands ready to cooperate, with other countries at the regional and international levels in that fight. However, those efforts will be meaningful only if they effectively prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, it is necessary to ensure that multilateral institutions redouble their efforts to achieve socio-economic development in many parts of the world as a way of addressing one of the many causes of conflict.

My delegation is concerned that nuclear weapons continue to dominate the strategic considerations of important States Members of the United Nations. Zambia, for its part, is committed to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. Any military doctrine based on nuclear weapons is incompatible with the integrity and promotion of the international non-proliferation regime, to which my country has been committed for the past 35 years.

In return, Zambia expects the five nuclear-weapon States to take immediate steps to achieve the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Unfortunately, there continue to be alarming signs of continued development of new generations of nuclear weapons. That trend, if not urgently reversed, will further undermine past achievements by the international community in that important area. I wish to welcome the new treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation, signed in May 2002, on the reduction of strategic offensive forces. Zambia hopes that the world will witness many bilateral initiatives of that type.

My delegation would like to appeal to all those States that have not yet done so to become States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the related Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Only then will the ultimate goal of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on all five continents have meaning. Against

that background, my delegation wishes to welcome Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. My Government hopes that other countries will follow Cuba's example and become parties to the non-proliferation regime.

Zambia wishes to request the Conference on Disarmament to redouble its efforts to achieve the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Eliminating obstacles to the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a convention on nuclear disarmament is an issue that should be given top priority by the Conference. My delegation remains deeply concerned that progress on a convention on disarmament has been slow.

As the Committee is aware, conventional armaments — especially small arms and light weapons — are the weapons most used in many conflicts. In the light of that fact, my Government continues to support and participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Because of the continued decline in the performance of its national economy, my country has been unable to acquire new arms. Nevertheless, the Government continues to support disarmament with regard to conventional arms, because such arms are responsible for the destruction of life and property in many conflicts, especially those in Africa.

Zambia continues to support international efforts to promote transparency and confidence-building measures at both the regional and international levels. In that regard, Zambia is committed to support the full implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is my Government's view that, if all States — particularly the producers — honour their obligations, the threat from that type of weapons will be eliminated in the very near future. It is Zambia's hope that all States represented in the Committee will fulfil their respective obligations under the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In addition, Zambia calls on the Conference on Disarmament to speed up negotiations to conclude the firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

The other important convention of significance to my Government is the mine-ban Convention. Zambia is committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban on anti-personnel landmines for all time. It is our conviction that all States will have the political will to achieve the universal acceptance of the Convention. My country is particularly pleased to note that the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties was successfully held from 16 to 21 September 2001 in Geneva.

My delegation commends the efforts of the Governments of the United States of America, Canada, the People's Republic of China and France to support international demining efforts. My Government looks forward to continued cooperation with those countries in the coming year.

There is an urgent need for the United Nations to devote more attention to the issue of missile proliferation, as well as to the related subject of missile technology. My delegation would like the Committee to carefully consider the report of the panel of governmental experts on that subject that will be presented to the General Assembly. It is appropriate that the issue of missiles and missile technology should be considered in a multilateral forum such as the United Nations so as to ensure maximum success.

The code of conduct that is being worked out should be supported by all countries with a view to strengthening international peace and security.

In spite of the difficulties, we should not give up on our efforts to urgently resolve our differences on the issue of missiles, for our future lies in collective success in that and other fields of disarmament. Success in disarmament will strengthen international peace and security, and that in turn will create the necessary conditions for social and economic development, enabling us to concentrate resources and time on the fight against international terrorism, poverty, hunger and disease.

Mrs. Notutela (South Africa): I should like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you and the Committee's officers lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

The crisis in the international community's endeavours to address non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control issues has further deepened in the past year. The international community has largely remained unable to substantively address these issues, which are some of the most central issues of our day. Narrow self-interest, unilateralism and lack of political will and statesmanship are paralysing our multilateral forums, which were specifically established to deal with those issues. At a time when terrorism and the potentially horrific consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction have captured international attention, the reality that sustainable initiatives to protect international peace and security are dependent on the collective participation of the international community appears to escape us.

It is obviously very regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament, which is defined as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, and which has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament, has again been unable to agree on a programme of work. This is the case despite the fact that there is almost unanimous support in the Conference on Disarmament for some sort of mechanism to deal with the issues on which we have been deliberating over the past few years. That is also the case despite the fact that there is general agreement that nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty to ban the production of fissile material for military purposes are of concern to the entire international community, and that General Assembly resolutions call on all of us to deal with those issues.

Despite the valiant efforts and leadership shown in the Conference on Disarmament by certain countries and their representatives this year, some delegations continue to refuse to recognize the legitimate concerns of other States, while insisting that respect and understanding be shown for theirs. This continued intransigence has only exacerbated the situation and left the Conference on Disarmament — an institution of great potential — exclusivist, undemocratic, unreformed, expensive and ineffective.

There has also been little progress on nuclear disarmament and little to show on the 13 nuclear disarmament steps agreed to by all of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT) at the 2000 Review Conference. While significant gains have been made through the Moscow Treaty with regard to de-alerting and reliance on the substantially fewer deployed nuclear weapons, real disarmament has not been addressed. Furthermore, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee in the new NPT review cycle was disappointing. Although some delegations expended much energy and effort on proposals and reports, no substantive interaction took place, and we ended up talking at, but not with, each other. This will need to be remedied for the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee and future deliberations.

As a country that stepped back from the nuclear weapons abyss, South Africa remains totally committed to the complete elimination of those weapons. We will, together with our partners in the New Agenda, submit two resolutions to the First Committee this year and count on past supporters to again join us in our pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

I also want to use this opportunity to extend South Africa's congratulations to Cuba on its decision to become a State party to both the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. This decision is of considerable significance, as it now leaves only three States — India, Israel and Pakistan — outside the Treaty. Cuba's decision underscores the cardinal importance of the Treaty, not only as the international community's primary instrument for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also as a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. Cuba's decision further underscores the importance of moving forward on the unequivocal commitment that was undertaken by all of the NPT States parties to the accomplishment of nuclear disarmament and of the 13 nuclear disarmament steps that all agreed upon in 2000.

Cuba's decision emphasizes the inter-relationship of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as well as the fact that by staying outside the Treaty, States are inhibiting not only the achievement of the international community's goals in this regard, but also the goals of the masses of ordinary people around the world whose voices are regrettably not often heard or taken cognizance of in this forum. Cuba's decision reinforces the self-evident truth that nuclear weapons must be taken out of the hands of all, whether States or terrorists, and that international peace and security cannot be based on the indefinite possession of nuclear

weapons by, or the aspiration to nuclear weapons of, a few.

Cuba's decision underscores the fact that nuclear weapons are a threat not only to those that possess them or to those that are currently threatened by them, but a threat to us all. Cuba's decision emphasizes the fact that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is not the preserve of those who possess nuclear weapons, and that the duty to address these issues rests upon us all.

South Africa also welcomes the endeavours of the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region and trusts that those efforts will add further impetus to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world.

While the proliferation of missiles is deemed to be one of the escalating and immediate challenges to international peace and security, we were unable to address collectively even the most basic concerns in that field. The report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects (A/57/229) is a sad reflection of the current state of disarmament affairs. Panel members had vigorous discussions but could not agree on a single recommendation for a course of action, and could not even agree on what the nature of the problem was.

The draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation has undergone some development phases in which South Africa has actively participated. Its success will depend on the degree to which the final text will be able to attract support, especially among States possessing ballistic missiles. Early drafts have not managed to address adequately the utilization of the benefits of space for peaceful purposes, and while at this early stage the draft code of conduct attempts to address only proliferation, it would be important to have a disarmament goal included.

The lack of progress regarding the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) continues to be of concern to my delegation. The joint ministerial declaration in support of the CTBT released by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 18 countries on 14 September 2002 underlines the urgency and commitment that those Ministers have accorded entry into force of the Treaty.

In the area of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the situation has also gone from bad to

worse — with a faint glimmer of hope being vested in the resumed meeting of the suspended Fifth BWC Review Conference, which is to take place in Geneva in November 2002. We had believed that the inability of the States parties to adopt the draft protocol to strengthen the implementation of the BWC, which had been the subject of detailed and protracted negotiations over so many years, was a low point in the history of the Convention, and we consequently approached the Review Conference in 2001 with scepticism and low expectations. However, it turned out possible for even scepticism and low expectations to be further disappointed when the Conference had to be suspended, unable even to agree on a minimal common position. The reconvened Review Conference will therefore be starting from a low point, and it will be important for the overwhelming number of States parties which joined together from all political groupings during the meetings in 2001 not to be forced into accepting a failure. South Africa was persuaded by the strong arguments put forward at the Review Conference by many of the States parties — from all of the political groupings — that it would be important for the States parties not to allow a situation in which no further work is done to enhance the implementation of the BWC. Those States parties, many of whose representatives are sitting in this room, insisted that a vacuum during the period until the next Review Conference in 2006 would be detrimental to the Convention and to our fight against the biological weapons threats confronting the international community, also as those threats are exacerbated by the scourge of terrorism.

To that end, South Africa would support a proposal at the reconvened Review Conference that would include: the rapid conclusion of the Review Conference's work with a focus on future work to enhance the implementation of the Convention, without raising divisive issues on which it is known that agreement will not be possible; no reference to the Ad Hoc Group and its draft protocol in the final document of the Review Conference; and agreement to establish a group or groups of experts to deal with a limited and non-exhaustive list of specific issues related to the Convention and to consider and reach agreement on proposals that could enhance the implementation of the Convention.

As well, such a proposal should include annual meetings of the group or groups of experts for a period

of approximately four weeks in two separate periods. If there is still time available after the reconvened Review Conference in November has completed its work, the remaining time could be used by the newly established expert group or groups to begin an initial consideration of their work. Further, that proposal should include annual meetings of the States parties for a limited duration of time that would consider the work of the group or groups and decide upon further work once issues had been dealt with. The annual meeting should coincide with one of the periods of time that have been allocated for a meeting of the expert group or groups. Finally, the proposal should include the possible strengthening of the United Nations Secretariat in the area of biological weapons so as to assist the States parties, especially those from developing countries, in the aforementioned work.

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the past year has proved to be something of a challenge. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has been required to deal with difficult institutional challenges which have resulted in a lack of focus on the core business of the Organization. South Africa is gratified that those difficulties now appear to have been resolved, and we take this opportunity to wish Ambassador Rogelio Pflirter every success in his new role as Director-General of the OPCW. The OPCW has once again faced the challenge of under-funding in 2002. The upcoming Conference of the States Parties, in The Hague will seek to approve a budget that accurately reflects the needs of the Organization to fulfil its mandate to ensure the complete elimination of chemical weapons. The principle of "the possessor pays" has been clearly defined in the Convention, and those countries that possess such weapons must accept the responsibility they have brought upon themselves by developing them in the first place. The world's only disarmament treaty dedicated to the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction must not be allowed to falter because of attempts by possessors to engage in creative accounting. Given the international security climate and the widely acknowledged fact that chemical weapons are an easy option in the terrorist's arsenal, the States members of the Chemical Weapons Convention need to ensure that the OPCW focuses very clearly and effectively on its core functions of the destruction and non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

South Africa welcomes the decision by Iraq to unconditionally allow United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors into that country to fulfil their task on the verification of the destruction of weapons of mass destruction and of their capabilities in accordance with the decisions of the Security Council. A source of concern to the international community is the situation in Iraq, including its non-compliance with international non-proliferation obligations — particularly as this relates to Iraq's obligations under the BWC and the NPT, as well as its use of chemical weapons and missile delivery systems. The completion of the investigations into, and the verification of, the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities has been much delayed, and South Africa would call on Iraq to come into full compliance with its obligations in that regard.

The situation in the Middle East like that in South Asia, is made more complex by the aspirations of States in those regions to weapons of mass destruction. South Africa reiterates its call on those States, as well as States in other regions of the world, to all become parties to the international agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and also to comply with international norms against the proliferation of missile delivery systems. Recent history has repeatedly shown, as was the case with South Africa itself, that security is not provided by the continued retention of, or aspiration to, those weapons. The possession of nuclear weapons by the apartheid Government in South Africa was, rather, a source of instability, destabilization and continued conflict in our region.

The success of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be measured in terms of the commitment by States to implement the measures contained in the Programme of Action. The numerous initiatives that have been undertaken nationally and regionally to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action are evidence of the growing political will to effectively and comprehensively address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

South Africa has, on a national basis, continued with its programme to destroy surplus and confiscate small arms. In addition, South Africa, together with Austria, Canada, Kenya, Mali, the Netherlands,

Nigeria, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, successfully co-hosted the African Conference on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms: Needs and Partnerships, held from 18 to 21 March 2002 in Pretoria. Among the objectives of the Conference were to review the commitments made in the United Nations Programme of Action and the compatible elements in Africa's Bamako Declaration, and to examine how national, subregional and international implementation processes can be supported by African nations and the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as by non-governmental organizations.

African participants at the Conference also noted that for Africa, preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a key element in promoting long-term security and creating conditions for sustainable development, which is a cornerstone of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Japan, Colombia and South Africa will again submit a draft resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. One of the issues addressed in that draft resolution is the first biennial meeting to be held in terms of the Programme of Action. South Africa is of the view that that meeting should focus primarily on exchanging information on the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action by all concerned, including international and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations. To facilitate the organizational planning of the meeting, it is important that an informal understanding be reached during the current session of the First Committee on who will chair the meeting.

South Africa is pleased with the outcome of the recently held Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We believe that the Mine Ban Treaty has irreversibly established itself as the international norm on banning anti-personnel mines. That is demonstrated by the fact that since the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty, held in Managua in September 2001, an additional nine States have formally committed themselves to the Mine Ban Treaty, bringing the total number of States parties to 129.

Ratification of the Treaty by Angola in June this year — as the last member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) subregion to do so — makes the SADC subregion, one of the most mine-affected regions in the world, also one of the first subregions, as a whole, to formally adhere to the Mine Ban Treaty. The objective of SADC to become a mine-free region has therefore taken a significant step forward, and we sincerely hope that that ambition will become a reality within a short period of time.

South Africa welcomes the progress that has been achieved in addressing the humanitarian objectives of the Treaty, which has been greatly facilitated by the inter-sessional work programme. However, that success would not have been possible without the enabling support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, as well as the Implementation Support Unit and the active participation of all concerned, including the numerous organizations involved in mine action, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations.

South Africa believes that the successful outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has strengthened the Convention as a viable instrument of international humanitarian law, which could proactively address various conventional weapons deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. With the extension of the Convention's scope of application to also cover conflicts not of an international character, South Africa believes that the focus should now be placed on negotiating an instrument that would effectively deal with the issue of explosive remnants of war.

Finally, South Africa remains committed to the work of this Committee and of all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums, so as to achieve the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to limiting the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence.

South Africa recognizes that the negative picture that has been sketched in the earlier parts of this statement may be cause for becoming disheartened and for being tempted to walk away, so as to spend our valuable human and other resources on issues that could provide a faster and less difficult return. South

Africa, however, continues to recognize the critical importance of the issues with which we deal for international peace and security, not only in our time, but also in generations to come. We therefore remain determined to continue to work singly or in cooperation with other like-minded countries for the achievement of our common goals, whether it is to prevent the illicit trafficking of a single handgun used to threaten even one individual or whether it is to prevent the continued existence of the most sophisticated nuclear-tipped ballistic missile that threatens mass destruction.

The Chairman: Before I give the floor to the next speaker, may I once again appeal to delegations to kindly limit their statements to 10 minutes, so that the Committee can use its time effectively for the benefit of everybody. For those speaking in their national capacity, the time limit 10 minutes, and for those speaking on behalf of other delegations it is 15 minutes.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I would like to begin by joining the preceding speakers in extending to you, Mr. Chairman, the warmest congratulations of my delegation on your election to guide the work of this Committee. My delegation is confident that your rich experience will be an invaluable asset to our Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election.

In 2000, through the Millennium Declaration, the heads of State or Government of Member States expressed their solemn resolve to, inter alia, free peoples from the scourge of war and eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction. However, during the past two years, neither a breakthrough nor any significant progress has been made in multilateral negotiations on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the United Nations Disarmament Commission could not hold its session this year, while the Conference on Disarmament has not agreed on its work programme for four consecutive years.

In view of the widely recognized urgency of nuclear disarmament, the lack of genuine progress defies logic. Is it because the accumulation of rust in multilateral disarmament machinery that the Secretary-General referred to has gotten so thick that it is inhibiting its functioning, or is it perhaps that the machinery is overburdened by the vestiges of the cold

war and requires a profound overhaul? How can we explain such lethargic movement towards the cherished goal of ordinary men and women, who are waiting eagerly for the implementation of the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear Powers to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The failure to achieve this goal is especially disheartening in light of the new security challenges presented by international terrorism. The tragic events of 11 September have had a strong impact on both international relations and on the minds of peoples. It opened eyes to dangers and risks brought by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The tragedy signaled the increasing danger of possible possession and use by non-State actors of such horrible weapons.

On a positive note, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), signed by 165 States, has been ratified by 93. Of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force, 31 have already ratified it. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has been signed by 165 States, 146 of which have already ratified it. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons and the initiative approved at the Kananaskis summit of the Group of Eight to earmark \$20 billion to assist the Russian Federation and other countries in reducing and eliminating weapons of mass destruction raise the hope that verifiable and transparent disarmament involving other nuclear Powers could become a reality in the coming years.

Strengthening international peace and security through the disarmament process and making its own modest contribution to that end have always been a priority of Mongolia's foreign policy. Here, it has always attached special importance to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery. In that context, Mongolia attaches special importance to the reduction and destruction of destabilizing tactical nuclear weapons. We firmly believe that nuclear disarmament is the key not only to the solution of a wide range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues, but also to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. Therefore, my delegation fully shares the view that there is a pressing need to make tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament, in particular in non-proliferation and reduction of tactical nuclear weapons.

During the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the States parties to the Treaty committed themselves to implementing the important conclusions and recommendations contained in the Final Document. In that context, like many other States, my delegation welcomes the decision of the Government of Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The NPT Review Conference also concluded that there was a need to establish an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal specifically with nuclear disarmament issues, and it called for the immediate establishment of such a body. Breaking the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and displaying the necessary political will to start discussion of substantive issues on its agenda are of crucial importance. Mongolia reiterates its belief that the Amorim proposal or formula (*see CD/1642*) could serve as a useful basis for further consultations. Our position is flexible. We are ready to consider any proposal that may facilitate the start of substantive work within the Conference on Disarmament.

A year ago the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, speaking at the Conference on Disarmament session, proposed that, pending the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, the nuclear-weapon States declare a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and promote greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. He also urged the United Nations to establish a register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material. The recent seizure of enriched uranium in Turkey clearly demonstrates the importance and timeliness of such action.

Mongolia consistently supports the consolidation of existing and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are important components of nuclear non-proliferation that have a positive impact on regional security and stability. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the five Central Asian States on reaching an agreement on the content of a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. In conjunction with the properly institutionalized nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia, such a new treaty could make a significant contribution to strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and to turning the entire Central Asian region, which a mere decade ago housed thousands of nuclear weapons,

into a zone of peace and predictability. This would foreclose the possibility of a nuclear Great Game being played in the heart of Asia by States or non-State actors.

Ten years ago Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. As seen from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/57/159, Mongolia has taken a number of concrete steps to institutionalize that status at the national and international levels. Nationally, we have adopted legislation that legally defines the status, imposes penalties for the breach thereof and sets up a national mechanism to implement the legislation. Internationally, together with the appropriate United Nations bodies, Mongolia is working to find ways of properly institutionalizing it. The 2001 Sapporo meeting of independent experts of the five nuclear-weapon States and Mongolia and representatives of the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat thoroughly examined the issue, and the participants came to agreed conclusions and recommendations (A/57/59). In line with those recommendations, Mongolia has proposed to institutionalize its status by concluding a multilateral agreement; our two immediate neighbours, China and Russia, have, in principle, responded positively to that proposal. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank our immediate neighbours for their valuable support.

Mongolia is interested in moving forward on this issue on the basis of general agreement. It is open-minded on the ways and means of further consolidating and institutionalizing that status. Being a special case, perhaps Mongolia needs an individual approach to consolidating the status and addressing the external challenges. Bearing that mind, Mongolia, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations bodies, is undertaking two studies on its economic and ecological vulnerabilities. The outcome of those studies will be useful in further consolidating the basis of Mongolia's status. At the current session of the General Assembly, Mongolia will present a procedural draft resolution that would invite member States and relevant United Nations bodies to continue their assistance in consolidating Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status.

My delegation shares the legitimate concerns of the international community over the increasing threat of the spread of small arms and light weapons and the illegal trade in them. The 2001 Conference on that

subject adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It also pointed out specific ways to develop international cooperation and provide assistance, as well as to ensure follow-up. Any positive step in the implementation of the Programme will be an important building block for resolving wide-ranging humanitarian and socio-economic issues related to this problem.

My delegation shares the view of Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala concerning the daunting challenges presented by non-proliferation education and missiles. Upon my country's initiative, the decade 2003 to 2013 has been declared the United Nations Literacy Decade. My delegation is confident that literacy will empower the poor and neglected and enable them to participate actively in the life of society, including in the struggle for disarmament.

Mongolia welcomed the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines as an important step in conventional disarmament. We are carefully studying the possibility of accession to the Convention.

It is also my delegation's belief that further reduction of conventional arms and the arms trade and an increase in the transparency of the military budgets of States would promote confidence-building.

My delegation wishes to underscore that the current setbacks in the multilateral disarmament process should serve as a call to Member States to redouble their concerted efforts for the search of practical and far-reaching measures of disarmament first and foremost in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Faessler (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to say, on behalf of my delegation, how delighted we are to see you presiding over the First Committee. Your long experience and your great commitment to arms control and disarmament are, without doubt, important assets for the success of our work, which is more important than ever before in this particular situation marked by so much uncertainty.

You can certainly count on the full support and entire cooperation of my delegation in discharging your duties. Allow me also to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for the outstanding efforts he has been making for the

cause of disarmament. Finally, I'd also like to thank all those who have had such kind words to say to my country following our admission to full-fledged membership in the United Nations.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be a central, indispensable element in cooperation among States. Since this is the first time that Switzerland is participating as a Member State of the United Nations in the work of the First Committee, allow me briefly to outline the principles and objectives of the policy of my country in this area, which is an essential part of our security policy and part of the broader context of our programme of action within the United Nations.

First, Switzerland supports all multilateral efforts in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation that seek to achieve concrete and verifiable results. We have acceded to all multilateral universal agreements open to my country in this area and we participate actively in seeking to re-enforce existing agreements and in the negotiation of new agreements.

In an increasingly interdependent world, Switzerland is convinced that the best way to guarantee its security lies in the conclusion of legally binding multilateral instruments, rather than through political commitments, declarations of good intentions or unilateral measures. That is why my country regrets the fact that for the fourth consecutive year, the Conference on Disarmament, the only negotiating forum on multilateral disarmament, has still not managed to adopt a work programme, despite the very commendable efforts made by all and that Switzerland supports. As a matter of urgency the Conference should embark without delay on negotiating a treaty on fissile materials.

Secondly, Switzerland is in favour of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In the nuclear area it is regrettable that the goal of disarmament advocated in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains a very remote goal and that there are stocks of nuclear material for military purposes, the existence of which can hardly be justified in terms of national security.

There is also the problem of tactical nuclear weapons. My country is in favour of a multilateral, universal and verifiable agreement seeking a total ban

on these types of weapons. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT, has not yet entered into force because of the insufficient number of ratifications. We welcome and join in the appeal made on 14 September by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of 18 States that all parties, all States that have not yet done so, sign or ratify the Treaty without condition and without delay.

Finally, stressing the importance of the universality of the NPT, we welcome the recent accession of Cuba to the Treaty and its ratification of the Tlatelolco Treaty.

The area of biological disarmament is a source of grave concern for my country. Biological weapons represent a real and serious danger. Know-how and technical progress in biotechnology and genetics are making rapid progress, both at the civilian and military levels, with the consequence of ever increasing risks of abuse. A concerted action by the international community is necessary here.

We welcome the appeal of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on biological disarmament. For my country the Convention on Biological Weapons remains, despite its imperfections, by far the best way to prevent the proliferation, development and use of biological weapons. We regret the fact that it has not been possible to successfully conclude the negotiations to strengthen the Convention. And we believe that efforts in this area should be vigorously pursued at the multilateral level.

Switzerland participates actively in implementing the Convention on Chemical Weapons and we have acquired resources to make a contribution to this effort. My country, along with other States party to the Convention, is continuing with efforts aimed at assistance and protection and supports those of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the area of training inspectors.

Finally, the international community has recognized that the proliferation of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction represents a very special danger for international security. This is why we welcome multilateral efforts to establish an international code of conduct against the proliferation of missiles. This work is now very well advanced and we hope that the draft code of conduct will be adopted by a large number of States at the conference that will take place at the end of November in The Hague.

Thirdly, Switzerland attaches very great importance to the full and complete implementation of the provisions of existing agreements, as well as to the verification of compliance. More specifically, there are still doubts about full compliance with disarmament and non-proliferation commitments in Iraq and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My country supports the immediate resumption of inspections by United Nations inspectors and by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq, as well as the resumption of inspections by the IAEA in the People's Republic of Korea.

In recent weeks we have taken note of statements expressing the will of the Governments concerned to comply with their obligations here. We are convinced that the resumption of on-site inspections will open the way to a peaceful diffusion of tension. Switzerland supports United Nations efforts here and counts on the cooperation of all States to find a peaceful solution. My country is certainly prepared to make available inspection experts to the United Nations, and, if and when necessary, to provide logistical support.

Fourthly, Switzerland supports all measures to improve transparency in the area of weapons and the export and import of all materiel, including small arms and light weapons.

In particular, Switzerland supports the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen the Register of Conventional Arms and to promote the participation of all States in its development. Furthermore, Switzerland has put forward an initiative with France on the traceability of small arms and light weapons. I will go into more detail about this within the context of the thematic debate.

Fifthly, Switzerland believes that the United Nations should play an active and constructive role in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. My country appreciates the expertise and professional competence of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York, the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva. These institutions, together with the regional centres in Latin America, in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific, make very valuable contributions, both conceptual and practical, to the implementation of existing agreements as well as in the framework of ongoing negotiations. Switzerland is determined to continue its financial

support for these institutions and to continue to work closely with the United Nations in this field.

Sixthly, Switzerland, faithful to its tradition, strongly supports the concept of taking greater account of the norms of humanitarian law in the development, production and use of conventional weapons. The uncontrolled and indiscriminate dissemination and use of these weapons have devastating humanitarian consequences and pose a threat to security and development in many parts of the world. The new partnership that has developed among States, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations has made it possible to elaborate and to adopt, in a very short space of time, the mine-ban Convention.

Concerning other types of conventional weapons that have humanitarian implications, my country welcomes the progress made in Geneva in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Again, I will go into this in more detail during the thematic discussion.

Finally, Switzerland is working actively to ensure that efforts in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation also contribute to the global fight against terrorism.

In the nuclear area, we support measures which seek to reduce the risk of access by non-governmental entities to complete weapons, fissile materials, radioactive substances or delivery systems. In the area of biological weapons, my country, together with the World Health Organization, has established a programme to train specialists to respond to bio-terrorist attacks. In the chemical area, my country actively supports all efforts to improve assistance and cooperation in case of a terrorist incident.

The Chairman: I would like, on behalf of all representatives, to congratulate Switzerland on its admission to the membership of the community of nations as a full Member.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. Our congratulations also go out to the other members of the Bureau. You can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Argentina.

The Republic of Argentina, today more than ever, takes the view that universalizing legal instruments in

the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction should be the goal for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Only with measures such as these will it be possible to lay the groundwork for mutually guaranteed security as a primary objective.

The region-wide determination to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was reaffirmed by Argentina in July 1998 in the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace free of weapons of mass destruction. That Declaration promotes and strengthens the perception of security for all States of the region and represents a clear-cut message on the part of our countries as to our objectives of transparency, cooperation and peace.

At the subregional level, the work of the Brazilian-Argentinian Agency for the Accountability and Control of Nuclear Materials is ongoing. This symbolizes the process of our moving closer to each other on nuclear issues — a fundamental part of a broader commitment to a non-proliferation policy and to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, all of which Argentina supports.

Within our hemisphere, our country welcomes with satisfaction the announcement by the Government of Cuba of its ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean — the Tlatelolco Treaty — and its decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This is helping Latin America and the Caribbean to become increasingly identified with the idea of non-proliferation.

At the global level, Argentina is analysing the proposals submitted at the most recent meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the NPT Review Conference, in order to continue working on them at the next session of the Preparatory Committee, which will take place in Geneva. The goal is to ensure that those steps are taken that were agreed on by the States parties to the NPT to advance systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of that instrument.

Along these lines, let me highlight that call that has gone out for the signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and for the immediate inception of negotiations, in the framework

of the Conference on Disarmament, on a convention for the prohibition of fissile material destined for nuclear weapons.

Argentina regrets the fact that, after six years, there has been no resolution to the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological (biological) and Toxin Weapons, on the basis of the text proposed by the Chairman, to achieve an effective verification protocol that would reduce the risk posed by biological weapons and discourage their proliferation. Argentina takes the view that no country should be exempt from a legally binding regime and calls for the exploration of innovative ways legitimately to strengthen the Convention.

With respect to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, Argentina reiterates its firm commitment to the purposes and principles that inspired the Convention, which entered into force in April 1997. In this context, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has a significant role to play, because it is responsible for handling a very difficult and complex undertaking, given the immense arsenals that have to be destroyed and the vast dimensions of the installations that have to be inspected — all of which will require large financial contributions.

The OPCW's mission has particular relevance at a time when the international community feels itself more threatened than ever by the phenomenon of terrorism. Argentina also identifies with OPCW's paramount objective, namely that of achieving universality for the Convention. Our country believes that every effort must be made to make headway on these and other issues related to the Convention.

In this vein, we are very pleased that the States parties have placed their trust in an Argentine diplomat to lead the Technical Secretariat. We believe that we must take advantage of the renewed spirit of harmony and cooperation prevailing in this new phase that we have just begun.

Concern about missile non-proliferation is another pillar of Argentina's wider policy with regard to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, international security and export controls over sensitive technologies and war materiel. Strengthening international norms and political instruments to prevent the proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is of fundamental importance to my country.

For quite some time, the Missile Technology Control Regime was the only control instrument in the area of missile proliferation. It is now necessary to complement this approach through universal and multilateral actions that are non-discriminatory and comprehensive. Argentina therefore supports the universalization of the effort to establish an international code of conduct regarding the proliferation of ballistic missiles that is currently the object of a negotiating process aimed at the convening of an international conference to adopt the code.

During the 2000 plenary meetings of the Regime, which were held in Warsaw, there was a consensus decision to name Argentina president of the Regime for the period 2003-2004. Argentina's active and committed participation in the Regime during the last 10 years stems from its unwavering support for missile non-proliferation efforts. In addition, Argentina also supports the work being done by the United Nations Panel of Experts on Missiles, which will present its report in accordance with resolution 55/33 A.

Confidence-building measures have played an important role by helping to create a climate of peace and friendship with our neighbours. This has been fundamental at times when democratic institutions have been tested as a result of the serious economic crisis affecting the countries of the region. Our country has been a firm promoter of confidence-building measures at the bilateral, regional, hemispheric and global levels, as we believe they provide the best way to demonstrate concretely the desire for integration and cooperation that guides our actions.

Argentina has put into practice with its neighbours practically all the confidence-building measures agreed upon at the regional level. We are determined to continue to accomplish this task while promoting measures and improving those that have already been implemented. We would also like to express our support for the work of the Disarmament Commission in the area of confidence building measures. We hope that it will be possible next year to conclude the three-year cycle with concrete recommendations.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has demonstrated the flexibility of States with

regard to combating the illicit trade in these weapons. It would therefore be desirable — utilizing international experience and the conclusions contained in the reports of the various groups of experts — to develop international criteria on arms transfers and discovering illicit trade routes and determining how they are supplied.

Using as points of reference the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference and the Inter-American Convention against Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Materials, Argentina is carrying out, or about to carry out, national disarmament programmes aimed at curbing or eliminating urban violence and halting the proliferation of firearms.

At the subregional level, the second meeting of the Common Market of the South arms group, which includes Bolivia and Chile and which was established by a decision of the Presidents of the six countries, held its second meeting in March this year at Buenos Aires. That meeting reaffirmed the principal objective of becoming a subregional mechanism for implementation and follow-up to both the Inter-American Convention and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Ottawa Convention was able to transform into international obligations the imperative of eliminating anti-personnel mines, which cause serious harm to civilian populations and whose negative effects continue for decades after the end of the conflicts that gave rise to their use. Our region has been among the most active in responding to this commitment, given the fact that almost every country in Latin American and the Caribbean is party to this instrument.

Argentina fully shares the objectives enshrined in the Convention, and has worked towards its universalization and its implementation. We have also submitted our national report in conformity with article 7, taking into consideration the progress made in carrying out our plan to destroy stockpiled mines.

Moreover, Argentina hopes that the next conference to revise the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will be an opportunity to strengthen that instrument, which is so valuable to international humanitarian law. In that regard, we also hope that the outcome of the activities of the working groups will provide an answer to the problem of

explosive war remnants and other weapons having indiscriminate effects.

As the statements made in this general debate have illustrated, we have before us a considerable number of issues to resolve that are vital to the establishment of a safer world. Resolving those issues will require genuine political will on our part to unite our efforts in order to achieve this basic goal of the international community.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): At the very outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. In the same vein, felicitations are also due to the other officers of the Committee. The Under-Secretary-General, my good friend Mr. Dhanapala, deserves to be thanked in particular for his comprehensive statement. We welcome to the Committee our new members, Switzerland and Timor-Leste.

We are meeting here for the general debate after a rather difficult and eventful year following the dastardly terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. This has led to new thinking in the concept of security. While efforts to resolve major conflicts in many parts of the world have shown hopeful progress, we have seen the emergence of a new sense of unease, tension and instability.

Despite considerable initial success, the war on terrorism remains unfinished and to a large extent wanting in proper direction for the next phase.

The situation in the Middle East and the Gulf seems to be sinking deeper into the morass of wider conflict.

There is no sign of lessening of violence in the Middle East as efforts by the Quartet and other influential players fall badly short of the much-needed serious and concerted push for a revival of the peace process.

The threat of new war in the Gulf appears to be looming larger day by day, despite efforts by many to avert it.

Peace and security in Afghanistan remain elusive, despite the victory over Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Efforts at reconstruction, rebuilding and rehabilitation have yet to gain any meaningful momentum. The situation is fraught with the danger of slipping back

into anarchy if the international community fails to garner considerably more resources and to make further efforts under well-thought-out and well-coordinated plans and programmes.

Tension between the nuclear-capable neighbours in South Asia; festering conflicts in different parts of Africa, in spite of positive developments in Angola, Sierra Leone, Sudan and the Congo; the hot spots in Eastern Europe; and slow progress in the implementation of peace-building in the former Yugoslavia — all are continuous causes for concern.

International security is also under constant threat from the continuously increasing gap between the countries of the North and the South — the gap between the rich and the poor; from political, economic and social injustice, inequity and unfairness — more real than perceived; from the lack of respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law; and from natural calamities, famine and diseases. Delegations have addressed all these issues in general terms in previous weeks in the general debate in the plenary. Many of these issues will receive more specific attention in the other Committees.

In this Committee, we focus on the issues of disarmament as they relate to the United Nations Charter objectives of promoting peace and security and contributing to socio-economic and political development across the world, making it a better place to live in.

Our predecessors, who founded this body, the United Nations, and wrote its Charter, in their wisdom realized the great need for and value of disarmament as one of the key steps towards achieving the aforementioned objectives. They put their faith in the four Ds — détente, disarmament, decolonization and development. Major achievements were recorded in the first half-century of the United Nations in the area of disarmament. Much more remained to be done to move towards the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

However, we are sad to note a reversal in the trend. It appears that disarmament has gone out of fashion. There is a discernible reduction of attention and interest among Member countries on these issues. Two apparently contrary reasons seem to be responsible. The first is a sort of complacency towards whatever has been achieved so far; the second is a sense of frustration, powerlessness and hopelessness on

the part of most Member States that major military Powers are not willing or ready to move seriously towards general and complete disarmament for all kinds of political and other reasons of their own.

Jonathan Dean, writing in a United Nations Association of the United States of America publication, says about the past year:

"The modest progress achieved in disarmament during the past year coincided with a number of serious reverses in multilateral arms control and disarmament".

However, the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization perhaps deliberately tries to look at the few positive developments witnessed during the period and to largely ignore the negatives. The first sentence of the relevant section is but an apology for an admission of the reality. It reads:

"There was little international cooperation in multilateral forums on disarmament the past year". (*A/57/1, para. 63*)

The signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty by the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation on 24 May 2002 to reduce strategic nuclear weapons considerably was perhaps the single most important positive event in disarmament during the past year. Very few believe that this will succeed in counteracting the damage done by the demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. The general feeling is that the new Treaty could have proven more useful if the concepts of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility were built into it with greater clarity.

Among the other positive developments are increased participation by Member States in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; regional initiatives in implementing the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in 2001; progress in mine action leading to further reduction in the production and transfer of landmines; some progress in specific conflict or post-conflict zones in practical disarmament in the form of the collection of arms and ammunitions from former combatants or illegal holders; and some success in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in general. In this connection, efforts of the concerned parties — including the Department for Disarmament Affairs, groups of States interested in practical

disarmament, as well as some non-governmental organizations — are worth commending. The successful holding earlier this year of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the next Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is also worth mentioning.

An event of great positive significance is the recent declaration by Cuba of its intention to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. We welcome that decision. We call on the remaining three States not yet parties to the NPT to follow Cuba's example at the earliest possible moment.

Sadly, the list of negatives is not only much longer, but also disproportionately more serious and disturbing. I shall only mention some of the more serious ones to flag our deep concern, including the scrapping of the ABM Treaty; shifting emphasis on missile defence systems; nuclear posture reviews by nuclear-weapon States; renewed emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons; nuclear targeting of non-nuclear-weapon States; the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)'s remaining far from entry into force; continuing efforts to develop new and more deadly conventional and nuclear weapons; a renewed arms race, particularly among major military Powers, including nuclear Powers; a dramatic increase in military spending by major military Powers; the continuing deadlock in negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as on efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space; the suspension of the review of the Biological Weapons Convention; and so on. Disarmament has taken so much of a back seat that, this year, the Disarmament Commission could not even hold its regular annual session.

Despite progress achieved in recent times, Bangladesh remains among the vast majority of developing countries constantly preoccupied with the struggle to maintain their relevance in this world of globalization by confronting the challenges of socio-economic and political development in the face of a lack of resources, widespread poverty, diseases and natural calamities. We can neither afford nor do we want to spend large amounts on armaments and military budgets. We are fully aware of the value of disarmament as an essential and important factor for achieving peace and security within and among nations, as well as for creating a conducive

environment for and contributing directly towards development. I am sure that all countries — big or small, rich or poor — have the same realization of the value of disarmament, even if some may not like to acknowledge it publicly.

There can be no debate that disarmament is closely linked to development, as is security. Disarmament involves non-proliferation and an end to the arms race; a reduction in armaments and military personnel; bilateral, regional and international treaties; other confidence-building measures; and a reduction in military expenditure, freeing resources for other development activities. It also involves disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. All these contribute directly and significantly to enhanced security, as well as to political, economic and social development. Sustainable disarmament is also a precursor to and precondition for sustainable security and sustainable development. Disarmament leads to a lessening of tension, reduces the prospect of war and allows people to focus more fully on other development challenges.

Bangladesh, therefore, calls on all Member States of the United Nations — big and small, rich and poor — to seriously consider the growing negative trends in the area of disarmament and to coordinate their efforts to bring renewed vitality to that pursuit, keeping in view the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. It should be pursued multilaterally, bilaterally and unilaterally. It should be pursued globally, regionally and domestically.

To that end, my delegation would like to particularly call for a few concrete steps. The first is revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament by pushing seriously for progress on deadlocked negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament should be used as the primary forum to negotiate all global treaties and conventions on disarmament. Attempts to bypass the United Nations system in such negotiations would give rise to questions of legitimacy and credibility. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Disarmament Commission should be held in order for it to be able to complete the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and to undertake new tasks as they arise. Implementation of the 13-point Action Plan adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be ensured. Steps should be taken to ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Greater emphasis should be

placed on improving monitoring and verification regimes in respect of all disarmament and non-proliferation-related treaties and conventions by increasing transparency.

Irreversibility of all disarmament measures must be ensured. Safeguard measures must be strengthened to ensure that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as chemical and biological weapons and related technology, do not fall into the hands of terrorists. Regional disarmament arrangements must be promoted by encouraging dialogue in different regions. The United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament could play a proactive role in facilitating such dialogues. In that context, I must mention that the continued failure of the authorities concerned to shift the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific to Kathmandu, its designated location, defies our comprehension.

The concept of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should be pursued to cover more regions. Particular emphasis should be placed on the early achievement of such status in the Middle East. In that context, we emphasize the urgent need to persuade Israel to join the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all its nuclear installations under international monitoring. Like other States in the region, Israel must also be persuaded to give up procurement, production, stockpiling and the use of all other forms of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. In spite of the demonstration of nuclear capability by two Member States in South Asia, renewed efforts should be made to persuade them to relinquish the nuclear option and join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

Renewed efforts should be made to reverse the trend of increasing military expenditure, particularly by the major military Powers. The concepts of the peace dividend and the creation of a global fund for poverty alleviation should be seriously reconsidered in that context.

Bangladesh is committed constitutionally to the goal of general and complete disarmament. We are already party to almost all disarmament-related treaties and conventions, including the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Ottawa Convention

on Anti-Personnel Landmines and the Biological Weapons Convention. I wish to reiterate our firm commitment to actively pursue disarmament in cooperation with all neighbours in South Asia, as well as all other members of this body.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, individually, Bangladesh, like many other countries, has only a marginal ability to influence the global issues of disarmament inspite of our firm commitment. But, those who can must do more. Of course, by pooling our efforts, countries — big and small, rich and poor — we definitely can achieve much more.

Mr. Al-Kulaib (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, on behalf of the State of Kuwait, to extend to you, Sir, warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that, given your experience and skill, our deliberations will be successful. At the same time, let me assure you of my delegation's commitment to fully cooperate with you to ensure the success of your work. We also express thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdős, for his effective and skilful stewardship of the First Committee during the past session. Our warm congratulations also go to the members of the Bureau.

First Committee discussions are taking place against the backdrop of the first anniversary of the 11 September terrorist attacks, which terrified the international community and claimed the lives of many innocent civilians. That fact confirmed that terrorism cuts across religions, nationalities and borders. Once again, in Kuwait we share the grief of the bereaved families, and our hearts and prayers go out to them. Of course, trauma of that kind cannot be forgotten. Kuwait has also been a victim of terrorism in all its forms. Therefore, I wish to emphasize once again Kuwait's full and firm condemnation of all terrorist acts.

We have seen the results of the solidarity and the determination of the international community in confronting the plague of terrorism, beginning with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We must renew that determination and reinvigorate that spirit in order to stem the tide of another plague that poses a threat to international peace and security: nuclear weapons and all kinds of weapons of mass destruction.

The time has indeed come for taking strong political and fateful decisions in order to implement

internationally agreed measures to rid our world of weapons of mass destruction. We have all listened to many statements in recent days, and in the next few days we shall hear statements appealing for the same thing. The peoples of the world have decided to live in a peaceful, safe and secure world.

Kuwait cannot accept that States that possess such weapons continue to hold them. Nor can we find any excuse for procrastination in implementing the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We all hope that appeals made by Governments of the world will be met by favourable response, and we remind them that they hold both the responsibility and the solution. In that regard, my country has welcomed the Moscow Treaty as a positive step towards the reduction of deployed nuclear strategic weapons in the United States and the Russian Federation. We urge both sides to take further irreversible, transparent and verifiable measures, in order to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

My country has also welcomed Cuba's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That is another step forward. In that regard, we call on Israel, the only country in the Middle East that has not acceded to the NPT and the only State that has nuclear weapons, thereby defying United Nations resolutions and repeated international appeals to accede immediately to the NPT, to eliminate its nuclear weapons and subject all its nuclear installations to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also call upon all countries of the world to stop sales of scientific and technological products that enhance the nuclear arsenal of Israel or of any other State seeking to develop programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

Kuwait reiterates its support for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We support the conclusion of a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable multilateral treaty to prohibit the production of fissile materials used in producing nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices. Israel's nuclear status constitutes an obvious disruption of the regional balance of power and is a source of ongoing concern for the entire Middle East region. It remains the main obstacle to making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Allow me to underline once more our welcome of the proposal of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating the nuclear threat, which was adopted in the Millennium Declaration. I would like to recall the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 1997 on the illegality of using nuclear weapons or of threats to use them for the resolution of disputes. We support the conclusion of international agreements to give guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States.

Regrettably, after one year, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on its agenda. We have not achieved universal adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force. Military expenditures and weapons sales continue to grow. In the past year, countries spent approximately \$800 billion on all kinds of weapons. The spectre of nuclear weapons looms on the horizon.

It is regrettable that we do not take into account the general progress made with regard to sustainable development, finance and trade at the conferences of Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg so that we may compare our achievements in those areas with our achievements on disarmament, which are negligible.

The world has seen many crises, and our peoples view the future with pessimism and anxiety. We must put the interests of our peoples above all other considerations in order to eliminate the pessimism of future generations. We are hopeful that tomorrow will give us a better future and that we will be able to drop from our vocabulary words like war, weapons of mass destruction, genocide and terrorism. My country wishes you, Sir, and the international community peace and every success.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (spoke in Spanish): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I can assure you of the unreserved support of Costa Rica. I should also like to congratulate all the officers of the Committee.

Costa Rica has special authority on the issue of disarmament. We were the first country to comply unconditionally with General Assembly resolution 41 (I), entitled "Principles governing the general regulation and reduction of armaments", unanimously adopted at the first session of the United Nations General Assembly, in 1946. That historic resolution,

which reflects better than any other the very essence of the United Nations, has been forgotten and has passed into oblivion. We hope its sad fate does not presage the ultimate destiny in store for the disarmament initiatives now being pursued. We condemn in the most categorical terms the continuing ambivalence and resistance with respect to the adoption of concrete measures leading to universal disarmament.

In 1949, with the constitutional abolition of our armed forces, we declared peace with the world. That exemplary act of selflessness has not been emulated by any other country. We placed ourselves in the hands of international law. We put our faith in the effectiveness and absolute primacy of the legal instruments governing international relations. We gave priority to promoting social development as the inherent basis for the legitimate security of our citizens.

Costa Rica has a long history and experience in promoting the disarmament agenda. Frankly, we are disappointed that little progress has been made. We feel disillusioned by the ritual calls to put an end to all wars. As long as we have arms, we will have wars. The equation is simple.

We hope that the warning we received when we discovered the new capabilities of international terrorism will enable us to move towards general disarmament. The solution lies neither in proliferation nor in the specialization of weapons but, rather, in their reduction and gradual and universal elimination. Terrorist groups, as is the case with all armed groups operating in the world, do not produce arms. They buy them. Our common enemies are armed because they have taken advantage of our lack of commitment to an effective regulation and reduction of arms. The price that we have paid is incalculably high.

While it is true that there is a certain shared responsibility for the little progress made on disarmament, the responsibility of a few States is very clear. It is ironic that 98 countries present here speak of peace when they have and maintain armament industries that, by definition, rely on war for their very existence. War is a business, and no matter how violent or unjust it is, it is still business.

Moreover, war is a dirty business. Only 20 per cent of the legal international market for small and light weapons can be documented and tracked by national customs services. Only 22 of the 98 countries that manufacture this type of arms publish any type of

official report on the sales and transfers carried out. In 2001, some 54 countries were linked to transfers and resales in explicit violation of the existing international embargoes.

There is a great lack of transparency in the international arms market. The control mechanisms regulating this market are obviously deficient. Licenses for the sale of arms, end user or final use guarantees and the rest of the existing control measures are insufficient. Transparency is currently not a priority. Parallel and illicit arms markets survive thanks to the action — or inaction — of many Governments.

This deadly market which respects no borders requires an exceptional international system of regulation. In this sense, we welcome the signing of the International Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, although we regret that they do not include the sale or transfer of arms between States or to non-State entities. The Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons suffers from the same defects.

It is absurd to claim that only arms merchants profit from war. In some instances, the companies producing the arms also make profits at the expense of the public purse. The manufacture of arms is heavily subsidized. In addition, several Governments offer tax benefits to the arms industry in the form of the so-called offset agreements and recoupment fees in order to make those companies more commercially competitive.

We are deeply concerned at the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. While in the past it has achieved its goals, approving the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, it currently devotes its time to sterile debates. It is unacceptable that some States take advantage of the defects in its structure and proceedings in order to evade their previous commitments.

General disarmament of weapons of mass destruction is an unavoidable commitment. In its Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996, on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, the International Court of Justice was clear in declaring that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear

disarmament in all its aspects." In this sense, we plead for the creation of an ad hoc group that would smooth the way towards full compliance with commitments entered into.

Costa Rica condemns the use, possession, threat of the use of and development of nuclear weapons. From an ethical, juridical and strategic point of view, there is no justification whatsoever that would legitimize developing this kind of weapons of mass destruction. We repudiate any military doctrine that would seek to justify the possession of nuclear weapons on the grounds of a misconceived conception of national security, statehood or military power.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is one of the fundamental pillars in the fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This Treaty, by banning nuclear test explosions, and by establishing an effective verification system, creates real obstacles in the way of developing any new nuclear weapons. For this reason, we are pleased to see that 166 nations have already signed this international instrument and that 94 have already ratified it. However, we note with consternation the fact that 13 countries that are nuclear-capable, including two Security Council members and others that have already carried out nuclear explosions, still have not ratified this instrument. Therefore, we urge and call upon all States that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so at an early date. The CTBT's early entry into force is no more than a first step towards general and complete nuclear disarmament. What must be adopted is a universal, juridically binding instrument that would prohibit the production of fissile material and consolidate the safeguards against the use or threat of use of this kind of weapon.

We deem it necessary to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with a view to beefing up its verification capability and creating an effective system for guarantees covering the physical production of nuclear material.

We are appalled at the lack of progress as to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). Biological weapons must be completely eradicated. In this sense, and in light of the Review Conference to be held next month, Costa Rica considers it necessary to adopt a specific plan — a

consensus-based and practical plan — that would facilitate implementation of that Convention.

The arms trade countless effects, including a heavy death toll. In 1998, a total of 588,000 people were recorded as having died in a variety of conflict areas. On the basis of data gathered by the Red Cross, it is estimated that 35 per cent of all war victims counted between 1991 and 2001 were civilians.

It is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers in active combat in 41 countries, and another 500,000 recruited by insurgent or paramilitary groups. If we add to this data the number of displaced persons, or those whose basic needs are suffering from shortages or other adverse effects, such as violence, the total number of victims becomes intolerable. In addition, on the basis of the 2001 Human Development Report, out of 138 countries for which we have relevant data, 51 allocated more resources to military expenditures than to education, health care and preventive medicine.

In the twenty-first century, we find ourselves with too many societies that are armed, but that are illiterate and sick. This can hardly be considered a sign of progress. Ever since 1997, in order to fight these negative consequences, to achieve greater transparency in the arms trade and to rein in the diversion of arms to illegal groups that jeopardize our security, Costa Rica has been spearheading the drive in favour of an international ethical code governing the transfer of arms. This instrument was endorsed and prepared by 19 personalities and institutions honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize, including our own former President, Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez. We urge all Member States committed to a secure and lasting peace to support this initiative, which seeks to ban the transfer of materiel and military personnel and to eliminate financial and logistical backing for those States whose military, police or paramilitary units participate in or contribute to the perpetration of human rights violations.

Costa Rica supports the collective fight to destroy and eradicate anti-personnel mines. We, therefore, hail the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are pleased that 129 States have ratified this Convention, including the countries in the world that are hardest hit. My country, always

committed to universalization and effective implementation of the Convention, appeals to countries that have not yet become party to the Ottawa Convention to ratify it at an early date.

Mr. Ulland (Norway): Let me first join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee and assure you of my delegation's full support.

The horrific attack on the United States a year ago demonstrated to the world that there are terrorists who will stop at nothing in their efforts to disrupt and destroy. It also demonstrated that international terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security. This threat must be fought by all available means, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. We can only imagine the impact if terrorists were to use weapons of mass destruction now or in the future. This is why arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation measures are so important in our efforts to combat terrorism. The challenge for this Committee is to identify measures and ways that can deny terrorists the possibility of acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

We recall that last year's session of this Committee adopted a consensus resolution recognizing the close link between international terrorism, illicit arms trafficking and the illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials. In order to build a common response to global threats, the resolution reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle for disarmament and non-proliferation and expressed concern about the lack of progress in this area.

Now, a year later, we should ask ourselves whether we have lived up to our commitments, or are still dealing with multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament in a "business as usual" manner. I am thinking of the lack of progress in important areas, such as negotiation of a fissile material treaty, universalization of important treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and compliance measures for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

There is no doubt that the international community has responded forcefully in a number of areas to the threat posed by terrorism. At the same time, my delegation continues to be concerned about

the lack of sufficient progress in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy and of sufficient recognition of the importance that the work in this area has for our fight against international terrorism. We call upon all Members of the United Nations family to renew and fulfil their individual and collective commitments in this respect.

The Norwegian Government continues to view the NPT as the cornerstone for international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The Action Plan and its 13 points for the systematic and progressive achievement of nuclear disarmament identified in the NPT 2000 Review Conference document are key reference points here. Regrettably, there is still slow progress in the implementation of some of these 13 points.

A welcome development is the United States-Russian Federation agreement on a new treaty on further reductions in strategic nuclear warheads. Reductions in the numbers of operationally deployed strategic warheads will be an important contribution to the implementation of the decisions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and to continued strategic stability and enhanced security in the new international context. While welcoming reductions in strategic nuclear warheads, Norway underlines the need for verifiable and irreversible reductions.

At the NPT Preparatory Committee in April there was a widely held view, which was also expressed in the Chairman's factual summary, that non-strategic nuclear weapons must be further reduced in a verifiable and irreversible manner. We hope to see an early start of negotiations on further substantial cuts in the arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons.

The unilateral declarations by the United States and Russian Presidents in 1991 and 1992 resulted in the elimination of a great number of tactical nuclear warheads. Those declarations are still relevant and should be reconfirmed and strengthened. We encourage the adoption of transparency measures, such as reporting on the implementation of those two important declarations, as well as reciprocal information exchanges between the two countries involved. In that regard, we would like to point to the transparency measures that NATO has proposed to Russia. It could also be useful to consider how the important United States cooperative threat-reduction programme can

contribute to the safe storage and dismantlement of tactical nuclear warheads in Russia.

Universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its early entry into force continue to be a high priority for Norway, despite the difficulties that have been encountered in this process. Self-imposed moratoria on nuclear testing are a useful measure pending the entry into force of the CTBT. Such moratoria cannot, however, replace the legally binding commitments represented by the signing and ratification of the Treaty. The verification regime is at the core of the Treaty. The full and speedy implementation of the international monitoring system — without waiting for the entry into force of the Treaty — would be a significant confidence- and security-building measure. Financial and diplomatic support for the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT organization must continue unabated.

As many who have spoken before me have done, it is with great regret that we too note the continuing stalemate in the Conference of Disarmament. This situation is undercutting the credibility of the Conference, as well as that of multilateralism in disarmament and arms control. We sincerely hope that the present consultations on the Conference's work programme will finally be successful, and that the Conference will be able to start substantive work by 2003. In that respect, we support the recent cross-regional initiative by five former Chairmen of the Conference.

We consider that the top priority for the Conference should be to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable fissile-material cut-off treaty. A cut-off treaty is the next logical step on the multilateral arms control agenda, and is essential if we are to advance nuclear non-proliferation. As long as there is a deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, we welcome the parallel process to identify and assess particular and technical aspects of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We need to deal with the entire field of weapons-usable fissile material in a comprehensive manner. All nuclear-weapon States should conclude and implement agreements to place fissile material that is designated as no longer required for military purposes under the verification regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We advocate the principle of irreversible disposition in order to ensure that excess

stockpiles of fissile material remain outside the military nuclear cycle. To that end, IAEA monitoring is required.

While initiating negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the Conference on Disarmament should also address in a substantive manner the other issues on its agenda such as negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament.

The "10 plus 10 over 10" initiative, taken by the G-8 in Canada this summer to intensify and improve coordination of international efforts against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction, is an important initiative that has our full support. Since the middle of the 1990s, Norway and Russia have cooperated closely on nuclear safety and waste issues and, more recently, also on chemical-weapon destruction. This cooperation grew out of environmental concerns, but clearly there is a close link between environmental issues such as the safe disposal of nuclear waste and nuclear non-proliferation and prevention of terrorism.

Norway believes that strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention must be a priority for the international community, especially in the light of the use terrorists could make of such weapons.

When the Review Conference resumes, we should use it to reaffirm our commitment to preventing the production, proliferation and use of biological weapons. We urge all States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to demonstrate sufficient flexibility so that a consensus decision can be reached when the Fifth Review Conference resumes. As part of that, we need to explore further national and multilateral measures to ensure compliance with the Convention.

Norway continues to be concerned about the proliferation of ballistic missile systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. We must curb and reverse this trend as an important part of our common agenda to combat terrorism by State and non-State actors alike. We need a broad and comprehensive strategy involving political, economic and diplomatic means. We see the work on an international code of conduct as a first step and as a basis for strengthening international efforts in this field. We encourage all countries to join this important initiative.

The United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons is a good starting point for intensifying our efforts to deal with what the Secretary-General has described as weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. The emphasis must now be on full implementation of the Programme at the national, regional and global levels. We are pleased to see the encouraging momentum that is taking place on all continents. Norway's emphasis is on tracing and brokering, stockpile management and destruction of surpluses, disarmament and development, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and, last but not least, on assisting affected countries.

Let me reiterate our firm conviction that we need a broad mobilization of Governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations family and regional organizations in the follow-up activities. The Norwegian Government stands ready to contribute both financially and politically to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. We are currently working together with a number of Governments regional organizations and NGOs on close to 20 different small-arms projects.

We are encouraged by the growing number of signatures and ratifications of the Mine-Ban Convention and by the clear reduction in the use of anti-personnel mines, the dramatic drop in the production of these mines, the almost complete halt in the trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines, the considerable funding available and the significant decline in the number of new mine victims. This clearly illustrates that the Mine-Ban Convention is becoming an international norm, and that multilateralism can work. There is a strong partnership between all States parties and across all regions. There is a strong partnership between Governments, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the International Committee of the Red Cross. But there is no room for complacency. There are still too many victims and there are still large areas of land that need to be marked and cleared. We therefore need continued political and financial commitment in order to reach the humanitarian aims we have set ourselves. Norway's commitment to mine action remains as strong as ever.

Norway welcomes the successful outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. We were greatly encouraged

by the decision to extend the scope of the Convention to internal conflicts. We were also pleased to see that there was consensus on setting up a group of experts to consider a mandate for negotiating a protocol to the Convention on explosive remnants of war. We hope that it will be possible to reach agreement by the end of the year on a mandate for negotiating such a legally binding instrument. Within the context of the Convention, Norway also supports the efforts to better address the humanitarian challenges posed by anti-vehicle mines.

Let me also say that Norway welcomes the effort to promote education on disarmament and non-proliferation. The report by the Secretary-General both underlines the need for more efforts in this area and the fact that we need to reach out to all groups.

In conclusion, effective multilateral cooperation is more important than ever. Forging a solid coalition to promote non-proliferation and disarmament is crucial. We hope this session of the First Committee will help mobilize the political will of Governments to continue ongoing multilateral initiatives and to step up efforts to find solutions and get moving in areas that are still deadlocked.

Mr. Yépez Lasso (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved elections. Your personal qualities, Mr. Chairman, as well as your great professional abilities, will ensure the successful outcome of our work. Likewise, I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his enlightening introduction and for the reports submitted at this session of the Committee's work.

Ecuador associates itself fully with the statement made by the Representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September against the United States of America, which my country condemned when they occurred, have given rise to a wide-scale examination of the threats to international peace and security at the start of the twenty-first century. Today's threats are different in nature. Long-running conflicts for which there is no fair and lasting solution in sight, extreme poverty, terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational crime must all be confronted with the weapons offered by international law and cooperation. Similarly, greater development

and well-being for peoples, democracy and lofty human values must have real meaning for the vast majority of people living in poverty. Social justice, respect for human rights and better access to work and to be productive for people in the developing world will therefore make a decisive contribution to the genuine establishment of international security and stability, as well as to the stability and strengthening of democracy and its fundamental freedoms.

The international environment is characterized by an atmosphere of confrontation and uncertainty. The violence in the Middle East and the non-implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, along with the continuation of other conflicts between nuclear-weapon States, pose a threat to international peace and create major obstacles along the path towards disarmament, non-proliferation and international security.

The rejection of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the new political and military doctrines that include unilateral preventive military action and do not exclude first-strike use of nuclear arms against potential enemies that have been identified as proscribed States are causes of justified concern for countries that have opted for the rule of law, disarmament and the promotion of confidence-building measures in their international relations. Likewise, non-adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by the sole State in the Middle East with a nuclear capacity serves to heighten mistrust and insecurity in that conflicted region.

As a reflection of that situation and due to the lack of real political will to make progress on sensitive issues, the Disarmament Commission did not hold a substantive meeting this year. Likewise, despite great efforts by various Chairmen, including Ecuador, the Conference on Disarmament has not succeeded in agreeing on a programme of work during recent sessions.

In such a complex international atmosphere, Ecuador reaffirms its full adherence to the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter. We also reaffirm our confidence in, and support for, a renewed multilateralism that is more effective and dynamic and that makes it possible to seriously address the priority items on the international agenda. That new multilateralism should also contribute decisively to solving conflicts, to constructive dialogue, to

development cooperation and, ultimately, to establishing peace throughout the world and building a more just and equitable international order grounded in solidarity.

Ecuador has repeatedly emphasized from this forum the need to respect and strengthen multilateral agreements on the elimination, reduction and limitation of armaments. Each time it has done so it has reaffirmed its commitment to the cause of disarmament. It is for that reason that we have been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) since its inception. That is also the reason for our active participation in the drafting of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which declared Latin America a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Likewise, last November Ecuador deposited with the Secretariat its instrument of ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). My country also supports the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and advocates strengthening its institutional capacity as an independent multilateral forum to ensure adequate control and monitoring of chemical weapons.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is directly linked to the social, economic and humanitarian problems caused by domestic civil conflicts, international conflicts and the activities of organized crime, particularly those linked to terrorism and drug trafficking. The implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference on this important issue will no doubt represent a positive step in the process of strengthening international peace and security.

My country is fully committed to the principles of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We therefore participated actively in the fourth meeting of States parties to the Convention, recently held in Geneva.

As an illustration of our pacifist vocation and as a reaffirmation of Ecuador's solid commitment to respect the norms and principles of international humanitarian law, it is worth pointing out that Ecuador has adhered to and ratified the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its respective Protocols, as well as the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and

Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, two important international instruments that support international efforts to achieve disarmament and strengthen peace.

Ecuador believes that measures to build confidence and strengthen peace in the Americas are key to developing friendly relations and cooperation between peoples as part of the scheme to promote exchanges and to publicize information with regard to the mechanisms put in place in each country to promote disarmament and arms control.

For its part, my country fully meets the annual requirements pertaining to the implementation of the Register of Conventional Arms and submits its standardized report on military spending. In fact, it is worth emphasizing that, since reaching a peace agreement with Peru, military spending has dropped thanks to a programme to reduce such costs. That programme serves to support my country's commitment to reallocate resources from military spending to the successful development of its people. Similarly, Ecuador believes that, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council must take decisions to complement the few existing, and rather ineffective, regional and national provisions with comprehensive conventional disarmament measures and initiatives at the international level.

It is particularly gratifying to note the adoption of the Declaration on the establishment of a South American Zone of Peace during the second meeting of the Presidents of South America, which was held in Guayaquil last July. That historic event is a reflection of the best traditions of mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence of the peoples of the region. Among other things, the zone is premised on promoting confidence, cooperation and ongoing consultations in the areas of security and defence, coordinated action in international forums, transparency and placing gradual limits on the acquisition of weapons, in line with the Inter-American Convention in that regard and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The adoption last July of the Lima Commitment — which is an Andean charter for peace and security — is also of special significance. That document sets out the principles and commitments for the development of a common security policy for the

subregion and the establishment of a zone of peace. It also contains principles and commitments for the regional steps to be taken in the fight against terrorism, controlling external defence costs, limiting conventional arms and increasing transparency. Moreover, the Lima Commitment also includes provisions to promote the declaration of Latin America as a zone free from air-to-air missiles, as well as medium- and long-range strategic missiles.

It is also gratifying to note that Cuba has decided to become a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to ratify the

Treaty of Tlatelolco on the banning of nuclear arms in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Ecuador's commitment to the cause of peace, total and complete disarmament and the strengthening of international security through respect for, and strengthening of, the major principles of the rights of peoples. I assure the Committee that the delegation of Ecuador will participate constructively in bringing the Committee's important work to a successful conclusion.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.